MISSIONARY IDEALS

MISSIONARY STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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T. WALKER, M.A.

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MISSIONARY STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

By the

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EDITORIAL NOTE

THESE studies, like *St. Paul and His Converts* and previous text-books of the same series, have been written for the use of all Bible students in order to help them to study for themselves the missionary ideals set up in the Acts of the Apostles.

The present text-book has the advantage over its predecessors of having been written in the mission-field itself. At every point an effort has been made to apply the ideals set up in the Bible to the practical missionary work of to-day. We believe that hundreds of members of Bible-classes and others have as yet scarcely realized that the Bible is from end to end a missionary book, and it is with the earnest prayer that this may help some towards this realization that this little book is issued. We

would take this opportunity of thanking the Author for remembering the needs of home workers and helping them so practically in addition to his missionary labours. May it incidentally cause those labours to be more than ever fruitful, by stirring up many to pray for, and otherwise help, the progress of the Gospel in Tinnevelly.

The Suggestions for Study at the commencement, and the Aims and Preparation at the end of the chapters have been written in this country by another pen, in order further to direct and stimulate united study.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Possible Uses of this Book.

THE readers of this book will come under three classes, individual readers, members of Bible-classes and members of Study Circles. The following suggestions for systematic study are intended for all these classes, except the last two paragraphs, which are specially addressed to individual readers and members of Bible-classes. A special set of suggestions to *Leaders* of Study Circles or Bible-classes will be sent upon application to the Missionary Study Secretary, C.M. House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. No charge for them is made to Leaders of registered Circles.

The Selected Scripture Passages.

If the object of this book is to be rightly understood, it must be remembered that the Bible, and not the text-book, is the subject matter of study. The latter is only intended as a *guide* to the study of the Word of God, and an indication of the missionary lessons ready to be discovered there.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

The study of the selected Scripture passages standing at the head of each chapter should therefore be the chief part of the preparation made. In some cases this study may supply the devotional reading for the day. Whether the time for study be long or short, it will be found useful in all cases to make a preliminary quick reading of the selected passages in order to gain a knowledge of their contents, and at the same time make a brief analysis of them section by section. This will both impress them on the memory and facilitate further reference to them.

Care has been taken to see that the statements in the text-book are justified, but the Bible itself is the only authority upon questions of principle. Whatever cannot be clearly proved from its pages may safely be regarded as a matter upon which opinions may differ.

The Chapter of the Text-book.

The object of each chapter is to guide the study of the Scripture passages, to point out the chief missionary principles involved in them, and to supply illustrations from the mission-field as to their modern application. In each case their topics are broadly indicated by their titles, by the quotations which precede them and by the 'Aims' given at the end.

The illustrations given may be indefinitely multiplied, and it is much to be desired that

students who have any considerable knowledge of missionary work should seek in their study so to multiply them.

The real advantage of this study is not to find principles ready made, but to discover them individually in the Word of God, and then to see their application in modern missionary work. Perhaps there is no argument for the truth and divinity of the Bible more convincing than to see how its principles prove themselves applicable to-day as much as in the time when they were written.

The Questions in the Text.

With many readers the answering of these questions will be the greatest help towards, and the greatest delight of, the whole study. Others may prefer to omit them and devote themselves only to answering the Questions at the end of each chapter. Happy are those who are drawn on to complete their studies by accomplishing both.

Where both are undertaken, the questions in the text should first be answered, as they consist largely of references. If they are answered on the first reading of the chapter, the chapter should be read through quickly a second time to catch its general drift.

Too much time should not be spent in searching for a single reference. Bible *searching* may or may not be synonymous with Bible *study*.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

In some cases there is scope for difference of opinion as to which are the most suitable answ rs to the questions.

The Preparation and Aim.

These have been specially prepared for use in Study Circles, but every reader is advised to make use of them. In any definite piece of study it is of the utmost advantage to have a definite aim and to endeavour to reach it. If the aim formulated in the book can be replaced by one which is more attractive or more desirable for the reader or group of readers, so much the better. But aimless study is never so profitable as that which has a definite aim in view. The questions put under the head of 'Assignments' are not intended to be divided amongst members of the Circle or Class (except where so stated), but every member is expected to prepare answers to all of them.

The explanation following them is intended to make clear their general purpose, to show how they tend to accomplish the Aim, and how they are related one to another.

Although the value of these Assignments will be greatly enhanced if every member has previously searched out and answered the questions occurring in the text of the chapter, yet this is not assumed, nor is it essential to the success of the Study Circle. It is essential

that the preparation indicated under that title should have been carefully made.

Questions for further Study.

These questions are added chiefly for the sake of those who are willing to go more deeply into the missionary aspects involved. In advanced Study Circles these may form a more suitable basis of study and discussion than some of those given in the assigned Preparation.

Busy People.

Whilst there may be some who can do all the preparation suggested, it is certain that many must be content to do only a portion. The simplest and easiest method of study is to read the Scripture passages, and then read the chapter. If only such of the questions in the text are answered as can be done quickly, this task can be accomplished in about two hours.

For busy Study Circle members the reading of the passages and of the chapter (omitting the questions in the text), and the assigned Preparation will be the best course. This also will require about two hours' work in all.

Individual Readers.

Individual readers are urged to carefully study the foregoing suggestions and to apply such of them as are most likely to lead to a

sustained interest. The use of the *Aim* is especially recommended, and the student should not pass on to the next chapter until some definite conclusions regarding the Aim have been reached.

Bible-class Leaders.

Bible-classes are of two kinds, those which are small enough for the conversational method to be practicable, and those that are so large that only an address can be given.

In large Bible-classes the following method is recommended. The Leader should announce at the previous meeting the selected passages of Scripture, and ask all to read them, and to come to the meeting with their Bibles. The Aim should be announced, and possibly some of the preparation questions suitable for this purpose, such as those that can be answered by a vote, or by a list of names taken in the meeting ; or maps that can be prepared by certain members ; or any question which does not depend for its interest upon its discussion in the class. The more preparation is made by the members, the more interest they will evince in the address.

The Address should be prepared in such a way as to assume on the part of the hearers that they have made the preparation requested. Nothing will cause them to prepare so certainly as to find that they are expected to do so, and

that they can only understand the address on this condition.

The illustrations in the text-book can be introduced and the address can follow broadly the lines of the chapter, giving opportunity from time to time for the members to look up passages in their Bibles. This method will be found to supply a wonderfully interesting series of addresses.

In smaller Bible-classes it is strongly advised that the Leader should apply for the Suggestions to Leaders of Study Circles (see p. 8), and use such of them as he deems most suitable. Probably a half-way course between the method of the Study Circle and that just described above will be adopted ; part of the time being given to a discussion of the prepared questions and the remainder to an address.

Should there be any doubt as to willingness to prepare, the early meetings might consist of addresses only, until an interest is aroused, and then preparation on the part of the members gradually introduced.

God's Missionary Plan

'There is nothing in the world worth living for but doing good and finishing God's work—doing the work that Christ did.' (*David Brainerd.*)

'It is a work which, if faithful, you will look back on with satisfaction while the eternal ages roll on their everlasting course.' (*David Livingstone.*)

'The sense of duty is so strong upon me as to overpower all other considerations. I could not turn back without guilt on my soul.' (*William Carey.*)

'More than a thousand souls in China will be swept into eternity while the people of God, in the gladness of their Christian privileges, are gathered here in their Morning Services to-day.' (*Hudson Taylor.*)

'I cannot consent to see His holy Name so dishonoured.' (*Hester Needham.*)

'On the threshold of eternity, and in the presence of my God, I solemnly bequeath to the Churches of France, my native land, the responsibility of the Lord's work in Barotsi-land and I adjure them, in His holy Name, never to give it up.' (*François Coillard.*)

CHAPTER I

GOD'S MISSIONARY PLAN

Passages for Study : Acts i. 1–14 ; viii. ; x. ; xi. 19–26 ; xiii. 1–4 ; xvi. 6–10 ; xxiii. 11 ; xxviii. 16–31.

A CERTAIN Tamil Christian in Tinnevelly, a convert from Hinduism, was known far and wide as 'the catcher of men.' He wrote classical poetry in the vernacular to catch men. He taught Hindu students Tamil grammar, privately and gratis, to catch men. He used his special gift of kindly courtesy to catch men. His whole life was dominated by one great idea and object, that of catching men. And, by God's grace, he caught many. Some of the leading Tinnevelly Christians to-day are the fruit of his labour.

As this man's life was dominated by one single aim, so the history of the Acts is the record of the elucidation of one supreme purpose, that of the evangelization of the world. The more closely

we study it in detail, the more clearly it is seen to dominate every feature of the history. Everything in the book is subordinated to it, and made to subserve it in the most distinct manner possible. If once we grasp the fact that this missionary purpose is the very soul of the narrative, determining for St. Luke the choice of his material, suggesting the plan of his arrangement and shaping throughout the structure of his narrative, we shall see that the Acts of the Apostles is one of the most beautifully harmonious and consistent books in all the world. In our next chapter we shall see how fully the great adversary, Satan, realized this dominating purpose, and set himself to try and thwart it with all his might and main.

1. **The Plan of the Book.**—It is usual to divide it into three parts, following the lines laid down by our Lord Himself in ch. i. 8. Thus we have (1) *Acts in Jerusalem,* chs. i.–vii.; (2) *Acts in all Judæa and Samaria,* chs. viii.—xii.; and (3) *Acts in other lands,* 'unto the uttermost parts of the earth,' chs. xiii.–xxviii. This, undoubtedly, is the main plan of the book, and shows us the Gospel spreading further and further, like circular waves propagated from a centre and growing larger and larger till they reach the distant

shore. In particular, the Acts describe *the first evangelization of the Roman Empire,* comprising at that period the main portion of the civilized world, as the first great instalment of that universal dissemination of the Gospel which the divine purpose had in view. The Roman Empire contained numerous provinces, some of them far from the metropolis—just as the British Empire of to-day includes outlying provinces and dependencies like India, Ceylon, Sierra Leone, Uganda, British North America, etc. Chs. i.–xii. tell us of the evangelization of the province of Syria-Cilicia; chs. xiii.–xiv. (First Pauline Journey) of the occupation of the provinces of Cyprus and Galatia (Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe); chs. xvi.–xviii. (Second Journey) of the extension of the work to the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia; and chs. xix.–xx. (Third Journey) of the dissemination of the Gospel in the important province of Proconsular Asia. Thus, one by one, the provinces were occupied in the name of Jesus Christ, till Italy itself was reached. Later on we shall study the remarkable experiences which befell God's missionaries as they planted His banner in one of these great Roman provinces.

But for our present study, it will make mat-

ters easy if we borrow a metaphor from modern times and regard the Acts as describing the laying down of a missionary railway from Jerusalem, *viâ* the various provinces of the Empire, to Rome the great metropolis. The towns and cities occupied may be likened to stations on this missionary railway.

Now, in making a new railroad, wise prospectors will determine its route with chief reference to the extent of population likely to be affected, and the amount of traffic likely to be realized. In the case of this missionary railway through the Roman Empire, God's wisdom is equally apparent. Apart from the All-sea Route there were two main lines of business and commerce along which traffic flowed from the East to Rome. The one may be called the Overland Route. It led from Antioch of Syria *viâ* Tarsus through the Cilician Gates (a pass of Mt. Taurus),—past Derbe, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, Philadelphia, Sardis and Pergamos, to Troas; thence by a short sea-passage to Neapolis; and then along the Roman route called the Egnatian Way, *viâ* Philippi and Thessalonica to Dyrrachium; from which port passengers crossed by a 'sort of tumultuous ferry' to Brindisi, and then took the Appian Way to Rome. The other

principal line of travel was the Part-Sea Route. From Antioch of Syria to Pisidian Antioch it coincided with the Overland Route; beyond that it proceeded, *viâ* Colosse and Laodicea, direct to Ephesus; thence passengers sailed to Corinth and, crossing the Isthmus, transshipped either for Brindisi and the Appian Way or for Puteoli *viâ* the Straits of Messina.

Bearing these two great routes in mind, let us now trace in the Acts the making of God's missionary railway (using, if possible, a sketch map). Starting from Jerusalem, it is carried first through Judæa and Samaria, on and on to Syrian Antioch (chs. i.–xii.).[1] (What are the main stations, in order, mentioned in this first section of the line?)[2] Proceeding from Antioch, as a new terminus, we follow it (chs. xiii.–xiv.) *viâ* Cyprus to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe,—all of which latter towns lay on the main route of Roman travel, save one, Lystra, and that only a few miles removed. So far, God's missionary

[1] A map of the journeys of St. Paul, and also a blank outline map of the same, price 1*d.* each, or 9*d.* per dozen, postage extra, can be obtained from Philip & Son, 32, Fleet Street, London, E.C. A similar map can be found in many Bibles.

[2] For methods of using these questions see Suggestions for Study, p. 10.

railway, apart from Cyprus, has stations, beyond Syrian Antioch, at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch.

As we know from events which had already occurred in the history, a station had been made at Tarsus also. (Prove this, finding chapter and verse.) So the Gospel may now follow the usual pathway of business and commerce through the Cilician Gates. In chs. xv. 40–xvii. 10, we find the pioneer missionaries actually pursuing this road (xv. 41–xvi. 6) as far as Pisidian Antioch, whence a new section of the line is laid (following, nearly, the Overland Route described above), *viâ* Troas, Neapolis, Philippi and Thessalonica. Thus our railroad runs along the Egnatian Way as far as Thessalonica at least. (Is there anything in the later history or Epistles to show that St. Paul and his companions worked as far as the north-west corner of Macedonia, so as to touch the further end of the Egnatian Way ?)

We notice that our railway builders now turn southward to Berea and Athens (xvii. 10–34), neither of which lay on the main routes of travel spoken of above. Here, then, is a little section of the line off the principal routes. (God had, undoubtedly, special reasons for

forming this side-line. What do you think they were? Why was Athens of special importance?) The evangelists next proceed to Corinth (xviii. 1–18), which, with its eastern port of Cenchrea, was situated on the great Part-Sea Route to Rome. It is as though a new section of the railway were laid across the Isthmus, waiting to be linked up with Pisidian Antioch, *viâ* Ephesus. This linking up follows during St. Paul's Third Journey (xviii. 23–xix. 41). He had already spent a Sabbath at Ephesus prospecting (xviii. 19–23). Now he pursues the old route from Antioch of Syria to Pisidian Antioch, from which he lays down the new section to Ephesus, with the result, as we know from other passages of Scripture (which?), that stations are formed not only at Ephesus itself, but also at Colosse and Laodicea along the Part-Sea Route; as also at Philadelphia, Sardis and Pergamos, which lay, as we have seen, along the main Overland Route (thus linking up Pisidian Antioch with Troas in the usual Roman way). So God's missionary railway is laid down, very nearly, along the double route of ordinary travel from Jerusalem to Rome.

We are struck, as we study the Acts, by the fact that the undertaking of fresh sections of

the line was usually preluded by the stimulus of some new spiritual awakening, or some fresh vision of God's purpose. And it is still the same. Scores of examples of the modern working of this principle might be given, but the two following from South India will suffice.

At a large Convention of Syrian Christians in Travancore some years ago, an Indian brother, acting under the influence of a fresh stimulus of grace, extemporized some verses which were sung enthusiastically again and again by the assembled thousands :—

Jesus Christ still lives to conquer.
Alleluia !
Jesus Christ shall conquer India.
Alleluia !

The practical outcome of such enthusiasm, fostered since by various means, has been a new section of God's railway opened in India by those same Syrian Christians in an unevangelized district of North Kanara on the west coast.

Again, an unconverted and worldly-minded Christian from Jaffna in North Ceylon was brought into personal contact with the Rev. George Bowen, a saintly American missionary of Bombay. The result was a total transformation of life and character. With

the assistance of his godly wife, he stirred up the Jaffna Christians to form a small Missionary Society, which took up work in a neglected part of the east coast of India. That led, in turn, to the stirring up of a well-known Tinnevelly Christian to start the Tinnevelly Indian Missionary Society, which is now working vigorously and with good success in a portion of the Telugu field. And that again, in turn, was largely instrumental in promoting the inception of the National Missionary Society of India, which has opened up fresh work in the Punjab, in the United Provinces, and in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Who can tell where a fresh spiritual impetus will end?

2. **The Personnel of the Book.**—It is interesting to observe that St. Luke mentions by name those, and only those, whose actions directly affect this missionary plan and purpose. In particular, he considers Christian workers only of importance in so far as they have to do with the supreme purpose of the evangelization of the world. Individual missionaries and evangelists are only visible to view so long as they are busy in the forward movement. Many of them doubtless did good work as 'Apostles of the circumcision' or as

pastors of churches; but St Luke has no further place for them in his narrative when they cease to construct fresh sections of the missionary railway.

During the initial stage of railway construction in Jerusalem and the vicinity (chs. i.–v.), St. Peter and St. John, as the chief pioneer workers, occupy the foreground of the picture. (Why, as regards our missionary railway, are they mentioned again in ch. viii. ?) Then St. Stephen becomes the central figure (chs. vi.–vii.), because of his missionary outlook and catholic sympathies, and because his martyrdom led to a wide extension of the railway. (Show, from his work and speech, that he projected such extensions.) He is followed by Philip the Evangelist, for the simple reason that he carried the railway forward through Samaria and beyond (ch. viii.). His figure then fades from view (save for one significant incident), to make room for St. Paul, the great missionary to the Gentiles, whose conversion and first labours are purposely dwelt upon (ix. 1–31). Notice, in this connexion, the brief appearance of Ananias on the scene.

St. Peter next reappears, clearly because he opens a new section of the railway for the Gentiles at Cæsarea (ix. 32–xi. 18). (He is

mentioned again in ch. xii. because, as in ch. viii., fresh persecution led to a fresh forward movement; see verse 24.) He makes room, in turn, for unnamed evangelists and for St. Barnabas (xi. 19–24), as they carry the railway to Antioch of Syria, the great Foreign Missions centre from that time forward. The narrative next centres round the Apostles Paul and Barnabas (xi. 25–30; xii. 24–xv. 39), as they push ahead into South Galatia. (Notice when, and how long, John Mark is mentioned. Why are St. Peter and St. James referred to, from the extension point of view, in ch. xv.?) Henceforth Barnabas disappears from view (Why? What causes led to his being side-tracked?); and the events of the Second Journey group themselves round Paul, Silas and Timothy. (Notice when Silas drops out of the history.) Apollos (xviii. 24–28) is seen for a passing moment (What had he to do with the railway?); and the rest of the narrative is concerned entirely with St. Paul and his companions. (Who were these companions? Where are they mentioned? What part did they take in the forward movement?)

Enough has been said, surely, to prove that St. Luke's notices of individual workers are entirely governed by their connexion with the

extension of the Gospel. Is God judging our lives at all in the same way? We shall reserve for another chapter our consideration of the special qualifications required in these railway pioneers. For the present, the great matter is to emphasize the paramount importance of using our best endeavours in furtherance of the Gospel.

In the Tinnevelly District there is a large Hindu temple situated on the sea-coast. Thousands and tens of thousands of pilgrims flock thither from all parts. It is built of stone, which had to be transferred for a considerable distance over wide wastes of heavy sand. It is said that, in order to transport the material under such difficult circumstances, the Hindus of those days formed themselves into a long line, stretching for miles over the desert sands. The stones were then handed from one to the other till they passed from end to end of that human chain and were finally placed *in situ*, till the temple was finished and its *gopura* or tower rose conspicuous for miles around. The illustration forcibly reminds as Christians of our duty as regards the fulfilment of God's great missionary plan.

3. **The Preternatural Phenomena of the Book.**—These also will be found to be regu-

lated entirely by God's missionary purpose. All have a distinct evangelistic value. In this they contrast forcibly with such spurious phenomena as sometimes come to notice in the mission-field. To mention only one : after a time of revival in a Tinnevelly Christian congregation, some mysterious and undecipherable characters, claimed to be miraculous, appeared on the inner wall of a Christian house. They attracted great attention, and crowds of people flocked to see and wonder at them. Much curiosity was aroused, but no interest in the Gospel. *They had no evangelistic value.* It only needed the lapse of time to reveal the fact that they had been inscribed on the wall by the owner of the house in a moment of frenzy and excitement when he was practically unconscious of what he did. Far otherwise is it with the real and genuine phenomena of the Acts of the Apostles,—which always have a direct bearing on the advance and furtherance of the Gospel.

Take, for instance (*a*) the *gift of tongues*, as it is commonly called. This is not mentioned as bestowed indiscriminately, without reference to special occasions or objects. We read three times in the Acts of men ' speaking with tongues ' (chs. ii. ; x. ; xix.) ; and on each

occasion the gift was vouchsafed with a missionary object, on the threshold of a special extension of the Gospel. The first occasion was that of the Pentecost of the Jews; the second that of the Pentecost of the Gentiles; and the third that of the inauguration of very special work in Proconsular Asia which led to the foundation of the seven churches of Asia with world-wide results of blessing. Thus the gift in question was, so to speak, God's special imprimatur bestowed at critical moments on new departures in missionary work.

Or think (*b*) of *the visions* of the Acts. We shall not find a single one which has not a directly missionary bearing. Nine are specifically mentioned (vii. 55; ix. 5, and parallels; ix. 10; x. 3; x. 11; xvi. 9; xviii. 9; xxii. 17; xxiii. 11), every one of them leading immediately to the wider dissemination of the Gospel. (Verify this.) The same may be said of the five *angelic interpositions* recorded in the Book. (Look them out, and find their evangelistic value.)

Or we may consider (*c*) *the miracles* of the story, which do not occur haphazard, but are, in every case, God's special credentials given to encourage fresh steps of missionary enterprise. We meet with them in ii. 43; iii. 7, 8;

v. 1–16 ; vi. 8 ; viii. 6–13 ; ix. 33–42 ; xiii. 11 ; xiv. 10 ; xvi. 18, 26 ; xix. 11, 12 ; xx. 9, 10 ; xxviii. 8–10 ; and we may observe that they were wrought almost invariably at some critical juncture of a directly forward movement. There is only one apparent exception to this rule (Which is it ?), and even that may be shown to have an important missionary value.

4. **The Particular Events of the Book.**—St. Luke's choice of material was plainly regulated by the great missionary purpose of the Acts. Why does he omit some things which we should have considered important ? Why, again, does he dwell in detail on many things which an ordinary Church historian would have omitted or very briefly noticed ? Here is a fruitful field for study, but only a few illustrations can be cited, by way of suggestion.

In the matter of Church Organization, he mentions indeed the appointment of the Seven (ch. vi.), but chiefly because of the work of Stephen and Philip in which it resulted and the Christian dispersion which ensued. But he introduces the order of elders or presbyters abruptly, without describing either its origin or functions (xi. 30). Why is this ? Surely because he considers evangelization of vastly

greater importance than organization, urgently necessary though this be.

Again in narrating the history of St. Paul, his special friend, hero and companion, he tells us nothing of his constantly recurring malady and comparatively little of his manifold and great sufferings for the Gospel's sake. We have to look elsewhere for detailed information about these. (Where? In which special Epistle?) He is silent, too, about the Apostle's retirement to Arabia and many other facts of his personal history mentioned in the Epistles. The reason is obvious. He is writing not the biography of an Apostle but the story of a missionary enterprise, and everything is omitted which has not a direct bearing on the object in view.

Notice, among many other things, the great length at which Stephen's speech is recorded; the fulness of the Cornelius narrative; the importance attached to St. Paul's address at Pisidian Antioch; the brevity of the account of the work at Derbe and Berea; the detailed history of the Ephesian episodes; the unusual diffusiveness of chs. xxii.–xxviii. Our sense of proportion will only be satisfied when we weigh each particular event recorded in St. Luke's scales. Writing under divine

inspiration he had only one object before him, the elucidation and illustration of God's grand missionary purpose.

NOTE.—We may see the formation of a missionary railway actually going on in India to-day from Masulipatam on the east coast to Bombay on the west. A glance at the map facing p. 151 of the C.M.S. Annual Report (1909–10) will show us how the land lies. Commencing from Bombay we have stations of our own Society at Igatpuri, Nasik, Manmad and Aurungabad; all included in our Western India Mission. Running through Aurungabad is the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway—which carries passengers to Hyderabad and, with certain connexions, to Masulipatam. From the Masulipatam side, our Society has mission-stations at Bezwada and Khammamett. During the last few years the new Tinnevelly Indian Missionary Society has opened up work at Dornakal, the junction shown in the map (though not named) to the north of Khammamett. This links us on, to a considerable extent, with Hyderabad, where again the C.M.S. (though not the C.M.S. alone) has missionary work. The interval between Hyderabad and Aurangabad is bridged, to a large extent, by the work of other Societies than our own. Thus we find the Wesleyans busy in Medak and its neighbourhood, while the United Free Church of Scotland has important work at Jalna. In this way a missionary railway is being carried right across this part of the continent of India. The section centring in Nandair is the only important one still to be occupied and completed, and, amongst others, the indigenous National Missionary Society of India has been recently surveying it.

PREPARATION

Aim.

To trace the missionary purpose in the Acts of the Apostles.

Assignments.[1]

1. Draw a rough outline map of the Roman Empire,[2] ready to fill in at the meeting with the 'missionary railway.' Mark beforehand some of the chief places mentioned in the chapter.

2. Draw a map of India to illustrate the missionary railway being constructed from Masulipatam to Bombay (see p. 33). On the same map, in a different colour, illustrate by lines the course of the movement started from Jaffna (see p. 24;) [one member only].

3. Name four prominent missionaries mentioned in the Acts, noting briefly the nature of their missionary work.

4. Prepare to show how the following objec-

[1] See Suggestions for Study, p. 11. Detailed suggestions for the use of Study Circle Leaders can be obtained (gratis if the Circle is registered) on application to the Secretary for Missionary Study, C.M. House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.

[2] Map showing St. Paul's missionary journeys will do.

tions are completely answered by the general drift of the Acts of the Apostles :—

(*a*) It is wrong to send missionaries abroad when there are so many Heathen at home.

(*b*) We should not interfere with the pious beliefs of the followers of other religions.

(*c*) Prayer and work is far more needed for the deepening of the spiritual life of the home Church than for missionary work.

[The aim of this opening meeting is to realize that the guiding principle of the book we are studying is the missionary enterprise. The chapter shows how this guiding principle is manifested in the way in which places and people are brought in and described, and in the selection of the supernatural and other events.

The aim of the meeting is realized in the first two questions by showing how the ' missionary railway ' idea is evidenced in the Acts as in the mission-field to-day. The third question applies the same principle to the persons introduced, and the last question is a practical application of this principle.]

Questions for Further Study.

1. Dr. Krapf wrote in 1851 : ' The idea of a chain of Missions (stretching right across equatorial Africa) will yet be taken up by succeeding generations and carried out. This idea I bequeath to every missionary coming out to East Africa.' How far has his predic-

tion been fulfilled, and his request carried out? How far does Scripture commend his plan?

2. When C.M.S. work was begun in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1906 it was objected to by some on the ground that existing Missions should first be better manned. How would you meet this objection from the Acts?

3. What is there in other books of the New Testament to show that the primary purpose of the Church's existence is to evangelize the world?

4. Make a list of the visions, miracles and other supernatural phenomena in the Acts, showing the missionary purpose of each.

5. What instances occur in the Acts of Christians scattered by persecution and so spreading the faith? Bring parallels from modern missionary work.

6. The first Christian missionaries occupied large towns and cities of strategic importance, whereas in some mission-fields to-day (e.g., in parts of South India) the work is chiefly in village districts. How would you defend these Missions from the charge of acting contrary to Apostolic example?

7. Supposing you had a sufficient supply of missionaries, what would you propose as the best line of route along which to establish mission-stations for the evangelization of the Sudan (or other large unevangelized area)?

The Missionary's Adversary

'Terrible are the manifestations of Satan in this land and city. He lets off his darts in every direction, and works as an angel of light on every hand.' (*Frederick C. Roberts.*)

'The constant inspiration gained by looking at the goal is the chief thing that helps me to persevere.' (*Douglas M. Thornton.*)

'Husband, remember, this is the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. He is counting us worthy to suffer for His Name.' (*Flora Constance Glover.*)

'We must wade, I fear, through much sorrow before we come to the joy of seeing an end to the reign of sin and Satan.' (*Alexander M. Mackay.*)

'The Lord is wonderfully near and He will not fail me. The pain will soon be over, and oh! the sweetness of the welcome above.' (*Elizabeth Atwater.*)

'If this is the last chapter of my earthly history, then the next will be the first of the heavenly, no more blots and smudges, no incoherence, but sweet converse in the presence of the Lamb.' (*James Hannington, Bishop.*)

CHAPTER II

THE MISSIONARY'S ADVERSARY

Passages for Study : Acts iv. ; v. 1–16 ; v. 17–41 ; vi. 1–8 ; vi. 9–vii. 60 ; 2 Cor. ii. 9–11 ; xi. 1–3 ; 1 Thess. ii. 14–20.

FROM the very first, strenuous opposition was offered to the progress of the Gospel. The ground was stoutly contested step by step. Motives of self-interest, racial pride, political prejudice and pagan zeal influenced men in their antagonism to the truth. (Give examples of each of these from the Acts.) But behind all these we recognize the great protagonist Satan. Just as, on the one hand, we see all through the history the hand of the Holy Spirit directing, controlling and crowning with success the labours of His servants, so, on the other hand, we see the arch-enemy busy at work, trying to hinder and thwart in every way their earnest efforts. It was from long and bitter experience of Satan's malice that the Apostle wrote, 'We are not ignorant of his devices.' Now, if we confine our study in this chapter to

Part I of the Acts (chs. i.–vii.), we shall find the great antagonist making use of *five special devices* in his determined efforts to frustrate God's missionary purpose. It will be further seen that there is a system and order in these devices. They were practised alternately from without and from within the Church, and each one was intended to be more effectual than its predecessors. At the same time, each one was over-ruled by the power and wisdom of God's Spirit for the furtherance of the Gospel; so that the adversary over-reached himself.

1. **Opposition** (ch. iv.).—We may always expect some special work of the Holy Spirit to be followed immediately by Satan's fierce opposition. The marvellous ingathering of the Day of Pentecost,—with the daily conversions which followed and the further increase that ensued on the healing of the lame man (references ?),—served as a direct challenge to the great adversary. At once his zeal and enmity were roused. Hands of violence were laid on the two Apostolic leaders. They were thrown into prison, examined before the Sanhedrin or Council, commanded to cease from preaching and threatened with severe penalties if they persisted. In this way, the adversary made a strenuous effort to silence

the chief missionaries in Jerusalem, and so to check, at the outset, the extension of the work to the regions beyond.

History repeats itself. The planting of Missions in other lands has frequently met with strong opposition on the very threshold of the work. Witness, for example, the foundation of the work in Burma, where Adoniram Judson was thrown into prison and grievously maltreated. In breaking up new ground in unevangelized towns and villages, various methods of antagonism are often encountered. Some of us have known opposing crowds shout vociferously by the half-hour together the name of some favourite heathen deity, *Gopál ! Gopál ! Gopál !* in order to drown the voice of the Christian preacher; or throw stones at our heads and cast dirt and dust in our faces in the hope of preventing conversions; or induce some one to burn chillies (strong red pepper) hard by, so as to choke the evangelists with fits of coughing; or command us peremptorily to leave the place under threat of pains and penalties.

Our narrative shows us, however, what to do with all such opposition. To the Apostles it was *a call to united prayer*. Neither their faith nor their courage failed. They appealed to God to deal with the situation. (Why did

they address Him, under the circumstances, as 'Master' or 'Despot' and as Creator? See R.V. margin.) They based their prayer on Holy Scripture, a good pattern for ourselves. They asked for exactly what they most needed under the circumstances (what was it?), but not for permission to desist from their enterprise. And they prayed with the right motive (what?), and left the threatenings and opposition at God's feet. (What texts invite us to do this?)

It is told of Ragland, a former Tinnevelly missionary of exceptional devotion and saintliness, that when he was preaching one day in a Brahman street, the Brahmans were rude and noisy in their opposition and knocked off Ragland's hat, afterwards forcibly expelling him from their quarters. It happened that the European magistrate of the district was camping in the neighbourhood and heard of this ill-treatment. He sent one of his *peons* (servant-messengers) to Ragland and asked him to lodge a formal complaint, that he might punish the offenders. The messenger found Ragland on his knees. 'Tell your master,' said the man of God, 'that I have already made known my case to a higher Magistrate, the God of heaven Himself.' And the prayer was not in vain, for that very day the Brahmans came and begged

his pardon, beseeching him to come back to their street and preach to them.

Mark in the Acts how *God over-ruled the opposition for good.* The Gospel of salvation was clearly sounded in the Sanhedrin. Only as prisoners could humble men like St. Peter and St. John ever hope to witness there. The opposition was followed, too, by a fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost, accompanied by marvellous results (classify these). We have only to think of the Uganda Mission to find a modern illustration, in our own days, of striking success ensuing on fierce opposition.

2. **Deception** (ch. v. 1–11).—Foiled in his first attempt to injure the cause *from without,* the adversary next assailed it *from within.* He sought to corrupt the infant Church, and so impede its usefulness, by fostering insincerity among its members. For God's reality Satan always has his counterfeit and sham. He produces spurious converts, spurious doctrines, spurious miracles, spurious teachers and apostles. (Give one example of each from Acts or Epistles.)

In this case he counterfeited *Christian consecration.* Over against Barnabas with his true offering (reference ?) stands Ananias with his make-believe. To all appearance the

actions of the two men were the same. Both sold their land and laid their money at the Apostles' feet. But, in reality, the difference between the two was as wide as that between light and darkness. The one was filled with the Holy Ghost; the other was filled with Satan. The one was a saint; the other was a hypocrite. Moreover, Ananias's deceit was not due to a momentary lapse; it was a premeditated plan, to which his wife was a willing partner. The Church was thus in danger. Such evil leaven would soon leaven the whole lump. (Show this from 1 Cor.) Insincerity and hypocrisy are fatal to vital religion and disastrous to missionary zeal. (Exemplify this from any of the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia. Rev. ii.; iii.) All the Apostolic writers warn us against it. And, as we see in this incident, 'the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.' (Collect and compare references to money in Acts, chs. ii.; iii.; viii.; xiii.; xvi.; xix.)

God's overruling grace is, however, again in evidence. Hypocrisy was checked; the work went forward; multitudes of new converts were gathered in; and the power of the Gospel was felt far beyond Jerusalem (references ?). Once more the clouds broke; wrong was worsted; Christ and His cause were triumphant.

3. **Persecution** (ch. v. 17–42).—The next attack was delivered from *outside* the Church, in the form of actual persecution. The continued progress of the work excited the adversary to try more determined measures. All the Apostles, this time, were cast into prison, and afterwards accused before the Sanhedrin. Their bold testimony there cut the Sadducean party to the quick. It was seriously contemplated to put them all to death. Only Gamaliel's intervention, under God, averted the catastrophe and saved their lives.

As it was, peremptory commands were laid upon them, and they were cruelly and severely beaten. (How many stripes were usually inflicted? See Deut. xxv.; and find a text in 2 Cor. bearing on it.) Ridicule, questioning and threatening (References in chs. ii., iv.?) were thus succeeded by blows, wounds and bruises. We note, however, that the Lord was with them. (Cite promises to that effect from the Gospels.) He opened their prison doors and raised them up a friend in the camp of the enemy.

The history of missionary work holds many a record of persecution, imprisonment and stripes. (What other stripes do we read of in the New Testament?) Stern,[1] of the London Jews'

[1] See Stock's *History of C.M.S.*, vol. ii., pp. 428–9.

Society, and his companions were thrown into prison by King Theodore of Abyssinia in 1863 and kept in miserable captivity for five long and weary years, indignity and cruelty being heaped upon them. They endured untold horrors with the greatest courage and patience, and were the means of the conversion of some of their fellow-prisoners and jailors. Their sufferings only terminated when they were set free on Easter Day, 1868, by Lord Napier of Magdala and his troops, 'a resurrection festival indeed,' as Stern wrote, 'a foretaste of that glorious resurrection when decay and mortality shall be exchanged for life and everlasting beauty.'

Similarly, Ramseyer and Kühne, with the former's wife and child, languished and suffered in prison for four years in Ashantee. The Glovers were stripped, insulted and mauled during the Boxer Riots in China. A council was held by their persecutors to take away their lives, and there seemed only a step betwixt them and death. 'Oh! father! mother!' said their frightened little ones, 'are they going to kill us, really to kill us?' It was then that the heroic mother made them repeat, 'I will trust and not be afraid,' till the children fell into calm sleep; and that the father heard a voice from heaven, 'When thou passest

through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.' Though they eventually escaped from their captors, Mrs. Glover and one of her little ones afterwards succumbed to disease occasioned by the hardships they had undergone.

Every mission-field can furnish illustrations of bitter persecution. Some twenty-five years ago, a young Brahman was baptized at the C.M.S. Tinnevelly College. After his baptism, he was seized by means of guile, gagged, thrown face downwards in a cart and carried off to his Hindu home, where he was closely confined for six months in an inner room, and placed on short allowances of food. Everything was done which force or guile could suggest to shake his faith and resolution. When he slept, the mark of Vishnu was painted on his brow, only to be wiped off indignantly when he awoke. God was with him in that inner prison room, and his faith was sustained by a copy of the Bible which had been taken from him formerly but which he discovered secreted in a box. When at last he managed to effect his escape, and was asked what it felt like in that Hindu home, he said, 'I never knew till now how dark it was.'

Only six or seven years ago, another Brah-

man youth who took up the cross to follow Christ was subjected to every kind of ill-treatment and persecution. He was cursed by his own mother; struck and stunned by his elder brother; locked up in a small room at home, after repeated beatings; dragged off to a distant town and there kept under guard; bound by a chain, on his return home, which was secured by a padlock; thrashed again and again by his relatives in turn for hours, and otherwise molested and maltreated until he finally escaped and sought protection and liberty of conscience among Christ's people. Even then, his Hindu friends followed him and sought, by magic and by mesmerism, to get hold of him. When all their endeavours failed, they were forced to acknowledge, 'No means which we have tried have availed against the Gospel.'

Here also, as we learn from the narrative of the Acts, God's over-ruling providence is seen. Stripes only served to fill the Apostles' hearts with joy. (Find as many references to joy in the Acts as you can.) New vigour was put forth in service. The growth of the Church was greatly promoted (vi. 1). The banner of victory still flew.

4. **Division** (ch. vi. 1–8).—Satan's fourth

assault was made, like the second, from *within* the Church. The very increase in numbers brought with it problems and dangers. The Hellenists or Grecian Jews, speaking the Greek language, reading the Greek Bible, and more or less affecting Greek customs, carried their ideals and predilections with them, on conversion, into the Christian community. They were the tolerant and progressive party. The Hebrews, or Palestinian Jews, on the other hand, were rigid and conservative, despising all things foreign and more than proud of their exclusive customs.

It was inevitable that friction should arise; and in this the adversary found his special opportunity. He resolved to 'divide and conquer.' He stirred up jealousy and party spirit. The Apostles were accused by the Hellenists of partiality. There arose the danger of a fearful rupture. Satan knows full well that a divided Church is shorn of its evangelistic strength. (What other instances do you know in the New Testament of his using this device?)

His attack was met, however, with rare wisdom. The Apostles showed true self-abnegation. They recognized in the attack a peculiar opportunity for promoting the efficiency of the work. The whole Church followed the

example of their patience and forbearance. Special confidence was reposed in the Hellenistic party. (How does this appear?) The sound of murmuring died away, and the spirit of love and unity prevailed.

One of Satan's choicest devices is to divide God's people. We see it in the Church at home; and there are numerous examples of it in missionary work abroad. The Tinnevelly Mission was rent asunder for three years, from 1835, because of the refusal of Mr. Rhenius, one of our earliest and most devoted missionaries there, to conform with Church of England usage. He was a Lutheran himself, and had come under the influence of the Plymouth Brethren, with the consequence that he would not recognize the importance of episcopal ordination but was determined to exercise ordaining power himself. There were, for the time being, deplorable results in strife and lawsuits as to the possession of church buildings and schools. Happily the strife ceased with his death, and the breach was healed. His tomb in Palamcotta, the headquarters of the Mission, still testifies to the high esteem in which he was held; and, to this day, his memory is honoured by all as that of a man who did a great and lasting work.

THE MISSIONARY'S ADVERSARY

In Travancore again, the Rev. Justus Joseph, a Brahman convert and earnest clergyman, was the means of stirring up a great revival movement, which at first promised well. Unfortunately, things were allowed to go to excess, and the leader of the movement began to venture on the utterance of prophecies. One of these predicted days of total darkness, after the manner of the Egyptian plague; and much reproach was caused among the Heathen when the sun was seen to shine as brightly as ever on the days in question. Some of them thrust lighted lamps before the eyes of the deluded Christians and asked whether they now saw anything. Mr. Justus Joseph's followers came to be called the 'Six Years' Party,' because of another prophecy which fixed the date of our Lord's return to a certain year and day. The fame of this prediction spread far and wide, and many Tinnevelly Christians also, acting from a sincere faith in it, sold their property and jewels and gathered, on the day foretold, by the seaside, expecting, beyond doubt, the Lord's return. When they saw the moon rise in glory over the water of the east coast, they mistook it for the glory of the great Epiphany of Christ's appearing, and clapped their hands for joy. Even after their

hopes had been disappointed, many of the Six Years' Party refused to acknowledge the delusion, and asserted that Christ had really come that day, but that His appearing was manifest only to a faithful remnant. The schism which resulted has not yet been wholly healed. Quite a number of the Six Years' Party may still be found in Travancore, and they are difficult to reach because of their delusion and self-righteousness. Satan glories in the disunion of Christian men.

God's over-ruling grace, nevertheless, is particularly conspicuous on this occasion. Unity, so far from being destroyed, was cemented. The missionary work of the Church was strengthened and advanced. The number of Christians multiplied exceedingly. A great company of the priestly class were converted. Stephen and Philip, among others, were raised up as pioneers. Once more Satan over-reached himself. The flag of progress still led the van.

5. **Martyrdom** (ch. vii. 54–60).—As the history proceeds, the battle waxes hotter and fiercer. Satan is seen delivering his fifth and most cruel stroke, this time again from *without* the camp. St. Stephen had proved himself a doughty champion of the Cross. He was a missionary endued with more than ordinary

spiritual gifts. (What was his five-fold endowment? See R.V.) His arguments were irresistible. He was more than a match for the representatives of three continents. (How can we show this?) His very face reflected his Master's glory. When placed on his defence, his words shattered the idol of Jewish exclusiveness. His opponents became mad with rage. They rushed upon him like infuriated beasts; and, outside the city, stoned him till he died. Thus Satan sought to silence the brave voice which continued to testify and pray while breath remained. But, here again, he over-reached himself. Stephen, being dead, yet speaketh.

'We are not ignorant of his devices.' Again and again, he has wielded the ruthless sword of martyrdom. (Of what other martyrs do we read in Holy Scripture?) Witness Ignatius, Polycarp, Felicitas, Perpetua and the other victims of the early persecutions. Witness our own Alban, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper. Witness the Madagascar martyrs, thrown from the rocks. One of these brave men, before he was rolled in the fatal matting and hurled down the precipice, asked permission to stand up and view for the last time, from the summit, the country which he loved so well. He feasted his eyes for a few moments on the scene, and

bowed his head in prayer. He was then rolled in the mat and dashed down the rock. As his body descended, he was heard singing praise to his Saviour.

Witness the Uganda Christians, speared, tortured or roasted alive. Witness the Chinese confessors murdered by scores during the Boxer riots. We shall not readily forget either the martyrs of Kucheng. When the band of 'Vegetarians,' as they were called, burst on the devoted little band, who had been spending a few quiet, happy days in prayer and Bible-reading, and broke the holy stillness with their hideous horns and drums, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stewart and their faithful nurse were cruelly done to death; while, in the next house, a company of ladies faced the spears of their murderers with Christian calm and cheered each other with the words, 'Never mind! we are all going home together.' And they went home together,—all save one, Miss Codrington, who, though badly gashed and wounded, lived to tell the tale of victory over death.

Witness Bishop Patteson of Melanesia, John Williams of Erromanga, Bishop Hannington of Uganda, James Chalmers of New Guinea, —these and many more. Chalmers had gone ashore at Dopima, with some companions,

hoping to appease a crowd of natives who had gathered in canoes with bows, arrows, knives, and spears. He had so often succeeded in pacifying angry cannibals that he was sanguine of doing so once more. But it was not to be. He and his friend were suddenly struck from behind with stone clubs. He was then stabbed with a dagger, and his head was cut off while he was lying senseless on the ground. Afterwards his body was divided among the cannibals, cooked and eaten. So perished, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, one who loved the cannibals of New Guinea with a warm affection and gladly laid down his life for their salvation.

But still as we read the story of the Acts, God's over-ruling grace works on. The Master rose and stood to help His faithful martyr. He filled his vision with heavenly glory and his heart with perfect peace. His martyrdom proved only the signal for fresh advance (viii.1–4). It led to the evangelization of all Judæa and Samaria,—to the founding of the missionary Church of Antioch,—and to a world-wide propagation of the Gospel. (Show this.) 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.' 'The law of missionary work is increase through suffering.'

PREPARATION

Aim.

To recognize the devices of Satan in hindering the spread of the Gospel.

Assignments.

1. Consider Acts viii.–xii. and starting with viii. 1–4 trace the recurrence in the same order of the ' five devices ' mentioned in the chapter.

2. Illustrate the same five points from current C.M.S. history. [Let various members select different portions of the field, and from the Annual Report or current magazines bring instances of opposition, etc.]

3. Which of these five ways do you think Satan is chiefly employing in the home Church ?

4. What should be (*a*) the attitude, (*b*) the action of missionaries and their supporters in order to successfully fight and conquer the power of Satan thus manifested ?

[The aim of this study is to utilize the ' five devices ' of opposition, deception, persecution, division and martyrdom in order to compare and analyze the operations of Satan as seen in various ways. The chapter itself deals with Acts iv.–vii., the first ques-

tion relates this to the next period, the second to modern missionary work, and the third to our home life. A fair comparison of these must prove interesting and deepen our sense of the reality of the conflict.

Having completed this study, the last question is intended to bring forward definite practical lessons as to our own attitude and action in order to combat successfully.

In the first two questions it is more important to see the working of the broad general principles, than to try and make out fanciful resemblances in detail.

In the third question each member should give his own personal opinion, when he has thought the matter over.]

Questions for Further Study.

1. Trace the working of Satan's five devices in Acts xiii.–xxviii.

2. Show how God's over-ruling grace was in every case manifested in all cases of Satan's opposition.

3. Apply the same principles regarding Satan's opposition and God's over-ruling grace to the life of our Lord.

4. Where, in the Acts, does St. Paul allude to antagonism and danger, first from without, and then from within, the Church? Can you trace broad allusions to the five devices in it?

5. Where in the Epistles does St. Paul (*a*) emphasize the importance of prayer in face of

obstacles and opposition, (*b*) connect together persecution and joy ?

6. What is the bearing of the chapter on the following missionary problems :—

(*a*) Overlapping and interference between different Missionary Societies in their work ?

(*b*) Caste spirit and social cliquism in the Indian Church ?

(*c*) The power and duty of excommunication for certain offences ?

A Missionary Centre

'I know that I have opportunities of usefulness at home; nevertheless, in heathen lands there is *gross* darkness and scarcely any gleam of light.' (*Thomas Gajetan Ragland.*)

'It is not those who have no ties to bind them at home and no sacrifices to make whom we want abroad. We want the best and the ablest, and those who can be least spared at home, to come out here.' (*Alexander M. Mackay.*)

'I thought it reasonable that I should seek to work where the work was most abundant and the workers fewest.' (*James Gilmour.*)

'Where is the flower of the intellect and energy of our English Church to come to our aid?' (*George Maxwell Gordon.*)

'If you cannot come, seek out and send your best and dearest, that their glory may be yours. If you have money, give it, and that not in driblets, but as God has given it. Above all, send your hearts with us; and, as you stand on the edge of the great continent of darkness, do for it with all your might whatever the whispers of God's Spirit may suggest.' (*Edward Steere, Bishop.*)

CHAPTER III

A MISSIONARY CENTRE

Passages for Study: Acts xi. 19–30; xii. 25–xiii. 4; xiv. 25–28; xv. 1–3; xv. 30–41; xviii. 22, 23; Gal. ii. 1–18.

BEFORE the narrative of the Acts has proceeded far, we find the centre of missionary enterprise transferred from conservative Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria, which became the real base of operations for the Apostle of the Gentiles. The reasons for this change are easily discoverable.

(*a*) *Situation.*—Antioch was, after Rome and Alexandria, the third city of the Empire, and was, practically, the capital of the East. It was situated almost in the angle formed by the abrupt meeting of the coastlines of Syria and Asia Minor, and so presented a natural centre of operations to missionaries passing from Judæa in the south to the countries of the West. While on the one hand it was conveniently approached by the cara-

van routes of the lands of the East, it was in easy communication, on the other hand, through its harbour of Seleucia, with the trade of the Mediterranean world. The great Overland Route, also, connected it directly with Rome itself (see Chapter I).

(*b*) *Population.*—It had been built about 300 B.C. by the Greek monarch Seleucus Nikator in the spot where the river Orontes passes between the ranges of Lebanon and Taurus, and named after his father Antiochus. There was, therefore, a distinct *Greek* element in the population, though the mass of the people were *Syrian*, and the culture and civilization of the city were pronouncedly Grecian. Being, however, under the Empire, the capital of the province of Syria and the residence of the prefect or governor, its official tone was Latin, and a considerable number of *Romans* were found gathered there. It must be added that the Greek founder of the city had, for political reasons, planted there a colony of *Jews*, and that the growing importance of the city continually attracted fresh members of the Hebrew race. Thus the population was mixed in character and presented special opportunities for missionary work. A Church planted in such a centre

was likely to be liberal and cosmopolitan in spirit.

In many respects, we may trace resemblances to the situation and mixed population of Antioch in a city like Colombo, the chief town of Ceylon. It is conveniently situated for purposes of trade and intercourse between the countries of the West and the lands of the Far East. The imports and exports of Southern India pass, increasingly, through its harbour, and when the projected railway which will connect it directly with the mainland of India is completed, it will become of even greater importance still.

You find there the ships of all nationalities. Its population, like that of Antioch, is of a very mixed character. It comprises a large number of Europeans; a still larger number of native Singhalese; a goodly company of Tamils, many of whom hail from South India; a considerable sprinkling of Mohammedan Moormen; and a distinct element of persons of mixed descent, in whose veins Dutch or Portuguese blood flows mingled with that of the Tamils or Singhalese. Christianity, in such a city, ought certainly to be cosmopolitan in character; and, given the true missionary spirit, ought to be far-reaching in its influence.

In Syrian Antioch, then, it seemed good to God's wisdom to found the great missionary congregation, the mother of all the Gentile Churches. Its glory and influence continued long after the history of the Acts was closed. It was prolific in the production of great men, —Ignatius the martyr-bishop, Lucian, the greatest scholar of his time, also a martyr, Theophilus the apologist, to whom we owe the word 'Trinity,' Chrysostom the 'golden-mouthed' preacher, and many more; while the famous 'School of Antioch' claimed theologians of world-wide repute, such as Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret of Cyprus.

Even to this day a large section of the Syrian Christians of Malabar look to the Jacobite 'patriarch of Antioch' as their ecclesiastical head. A good deal of obscurity attaches to the question of the first foundation of this Syrian Church in Travancore and Cochin. They claim to derive their origin from St. Thomas. However this may be, they can be proved to have existed there at least from the fourth century of our era. During the Portuguese domination, however, they were compelled by force to wear the papal yoke. At a later period a large section revolted and

connected themselves with Antioch, or rather with the Jacobite patriarch who claims to represent that Apostolic see, and became Jacobites, keeping up their connexion with Antioch to this day.

It is only fair to add that a considerable section have reformed themselves, and styling themselves the 'Mar Thoma Church' have now much in common with ourselves. As a purified episcopal Church, they are advancing in spiritual life and missionary zeal.

We see, then, that in spite of later corruptions the Church of Antioch has exercised a lasting impression on the world outside; and the Syriac versions of the Scriptures have spread light and truth far and wide. Clearly God's blessing rests on missionary-hearted Churches. They are, to use a suggestive Tamil illustration, like the graceful cocoanut tree which drinks in water by its roots only to give it out to others, sweetened and enriched, in the form of luscious juice, from its head, and it does not grow the poorer for its gifts. This being so, we shall do well to ask,—What are the special characteristics of the Church of Antioch, the first typical missionary Church?

1. **It was a Cosmopolitan Church.**—As we have seen, the population of the place was

mixed, comprising Syrians, Jews, Greeks and Romans. We see this feature reflected in the composition of the Antiochene Church.

The evangelists from Cyprus and Cyrene, themselves Hellenistic Jews, addressed their message here, for the first time, especially to 'the Greeks' (R.V.), i.e. Greek-speaking Gentiles; 'and a great number of those that believed turned unto the Lord.' Among these would be both Greeks and Syrians, with, probably, a sprinkling of Romans. They represented, most likely, that body of Gentiles who had previously come under the influence of Judaism and were, in varying degrees, in touch with the Jewish synagogue. (Have we had any instance, previously, in the Acts of a full Jewish proselyte of Antioch?) They were not, however, for the most part, circumcised. (What verses in the Acts and in Galatians show this?)

They have their modern counterparts in India, China, etc., in those who know much of Christ but have not crossed the rubicon of baptism. (Do we know the name of any uncircumcised Christian who accompanied St. Paul from Antioch?) There were also Jewish converts in the Church of Antioch. Thus the congregation was cosmopolitan in

character and composition, and so well fitted to become a missionary community. Being catholic in spirit and sympathy, it could feel for, and yearn over, the whole wide world of men. The more diversified the elements gathered into a Christian congregation, the more likely is that congregation to become a missionary power. Racial or caste spirit is the death of evangelistic zeal. (Why did a large section of the Church of Jerusalem constantly oppose St. Paul's work? Give reasons both from Acts and Epistles.)

Some of us have heard a missionary Bishop tell how, in a certain district of South India, the major part of a congregation gathered in church for a Confirmation Service fled through the windows because he insisted on candidates being brought there who were regarded by the others as unworthy, on social grounds, to join with them in worship. Those who resented the intrusion of their poorer brethren represented a well-to-do section of the community who had come to regard Christianity as almost their exclusive monopoly in that district. With such a spirit, they could scarcely yearn over all sorts and conditions of men.

While we deplore such things in others we ourselves need to beware lest, however un-

consciously, national and racial pride hinder, through us, the progress of the Gospel. A Tamil pastor once told how some of the leading members of his congregation, when he had gone to preach to some poor people whom they regarded as outcaste and unclean, threatened to burn down the houses of any of those despised folk if they dared to seek admission to the Christian Church.

These facts are mentioned not as ordinary occurrences but as somewhat extreme instances of the way in which racial or caste feeling, in congregations drawn chiefly from one section of a community, may and does seriously militate against aggressive missionary work.

On the other hand, memory recalls how, at some large evangelistic meetings for Hindus, also in Southern India, a number of speakers of various nationalities, but all united in Christ and all actuated with one common love to Him, testified, one by one, in various languages, to the reality of the salvation which they had found and enjoyed in Him. Tamils, Telugus, Ceylonese, Englishmen, Americans and Danes—all had one tale to tell of grace and joy realized in a common Saviour ; and all had one desire, to see others brought to the knowledge of His truth. To use an Indian

illustration, when the rice-fields are full of ripening grain the little ridges which divide them into plots and sections are lost to view, and we see not a series of separate patches but one wide stretch of living green. Christian unity and missionary fruitfulness will be found to go together.

2. **It was a Vigorous and Progressive Church.** —From the very first, conversions were numerous there, and the community continued to grow and expand. In at least four verses of the Acts stress is laid on the increasing size of the congregation. (Find them in Acts xi.; xv.) Three distinct stages of expansion are indicated in its initial history (xi. 20, 21; 22–24; 25–26). All was life, vigour, progress; there was no stagnation or standing still. The ' hand of the Lord ' was put forth there in saving power, if not also in signs and miracles. The ' grace of God ' was seen there in changed characters and consistent lives. Emphasis, moreover, is purposely laid on the Saviour's ' *lordship* ' and His claim on the service of His redeemed ones. (In what verses? Why is this specially the case at Antioch? What bearing has it on missionary work?) We see, as we read, that the three great marks of this Church, in its first period of existence,

are *conversion, continuance* and *constant increase.* (Find the verses which show this.) It will be found that the missionary outcome of a Church or congregation always depends on its spiritual life and vigour. Periods of quickening are epochs in missionary history.

Take, for example, the Church of England, and what has been called 'the missionary awakening.' Was not this the direct result of the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century? Or study the history of the religious community called the *Unitas Fratrum* with its outcome in the Moravian Missionary Society. Is not the wide extension of the Uganda Mission due to the influx of new life and vigour into it in 1893? When, again, the American evangelists, Moody and Sankey, held their evangelistic campaigns in Great Britain in 1882–3, one of the most practical and permanent effects was seen in a great deepening of the missionary spirit, especially among the youth of our Universities. Students were led first to Christ and then to His missionary service. To quote a few definite examples, one Cambridge man who had been given to pleasure and horse-racing was led to yield himself and his means for the service of Christ in Africa. Another undergraduate, who had at first opposed the meetings

of the evangelists, was so completely laid hold of by God's Spirit that he went back to his college rooms, tore up his packs of cards, poured out his wine bottles on the ground and declared himself a converted Christian. He is now a missionary Bishop in China. The famous 'Cambridge Seven' were another outcome of Moody's work, since some of them owed their conversion and others their consecration to his influence, under God. As these seven men went from college to college and from town to town, the fire of missionary enthusiasm was kindled far and wide. Quite a number of men, still working in the foreign field, date their conversion or missionary call to the same stirring period.

The same phenomenon may be observed in many lands,—spiritual quickening followed by evangelistic zeal. A young Tamil schoolmaster, after coming into a fresh experience of grace and power, was sent to work in a Hindu village. He laboured earnestly to win souls, with the result that the boys in his school began to forsake idols and to turn their hearts to Christ; while a number of the young men of the place, one by one, became Christians. One of these young men, a strong and vigorous youth, when asked what first influenced him

to become a Christian, said, 'The schoolmaster used to follow me to my work in the fields and plead with me to seek the Saviour, till I could no longer resist the plea.'

3. **It was a Well-Instructed Church.**—Emphasis is evidently laid on this in St. Luke's narrative. He attaches great importance to the fact that the Church was carefully grounded and established in Scripture knowledge and in all the doctrines of the Gospel. (What command of Christ in St. Matthew enjoins this?) No less than eight teachers are mentioned by name as playing an important part in its instruction, besides others whose names are not recorded. (Who were these eight? and what share had they in the training of the Church?) *Exhorting, teaching, prophesying* and *confirming* are all noticed in connexion with this work of instruction and missionary equipment. (Find the passages. What do you think is meant by each of these four words?) Information about missionary work, also, was not lacking, as the enterprise proceeded. (Show this. What missionary meetings were probably held at Antioch?)

Ignorance of God's word and will and work accounts largely, in any congregation, for the absence of missionary interest and zeal. On

the other hand, a clear knowledge of God's purpose, as revealed in Scripture, removes opposition, dispels apathy and rouses to evangelistic effort. (Cite a definite instance of this from the Acts itself.) The same effects often follow from a full knowledge of definite missionary facts. (Quote an instance of this, also from the Acts.) We see, therefore, the great importance of Bible study,—and, in its place, of missionary information,—to the formation and cultivation of the missionary spirit.

It was when the Moravian Brethren,—a small community of earnest Christian people gathered together by Count Zinzendorf at Hernnhut in Saxony, after their emigration thither from Moravia,—were carefully studying St. John's First Epistle, section by section, that they got such a vision of the wondrous love of God as melted their hearts and constrained some of them to volunteer for missionary work in the West Indies, even though it might mean becoming slaves themselves, in order to evangelize the slaves. From that time forward, the flame of missionary zeal has continued to burn brightly among them, and we find them at work in some of the most lonely and difficult parts of the earth, among the snows of Canada and on the barren

borders of Tibet, as well as in South Africa, Australasia and elsewhere. The number of their converts in the mission-fields far exceeds that of their members in the home-lands, and they are a shining example in their simplicity and ardour to other Christian Churches.

It is from congregations with a full and faithful ministry, such as was that of Charles Simeon at Cambridge, that come forth the Henry Martyns, Corries and Thomasons.[1] Mackay of Uganda was right when he said, 'There can be no evolution without corresponding and previous involution.'

A somewhat dignified Tamil *moonshee* (language teacher) would, for years, have nothing to do with street preaching or open aggressive efforts. He was cold and careless as regards evangelistic work. Then came the time when he began to read the *Life of Faith* and to study his Bible. As he read and understood God's will, his whole attitude was changed. The fire began to burn. All his spare time was given now to the furtherance of the Gospel. He was more than ready to take part in any effort for the salvation of souls. Ignorance gave place to knowledge, and carelessness to earnestness.

[1] See Stock's *History of C.M.S.*, vol. i., pp. 81, 112, 113; vol. ii., 159.

One of the last scenes in his earthly life shows him standing before a Hindu temple, pleading with the Heathen to accept the Saviour. Like St. Paul at Corinth, he was 'constrained by the Word' (Acts xviii. 5, R.V.) to testify that Jesus is the Christ and Saviour.

4. **It was a Witnessing Church.**—'The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.' So long as faith in the Saviour was confined to Jewish believers, there was no need to give them a distinctive name. They seemed to the world at large only a Jewish sect,—a new 'synagogue,' so to speak.

At Antioch, however, things were different. Many of the heathen population saw their own friends and relatives embrace the new faith and join the new community. The prevailing tone of the Church was not Jewish but Gentile. The rapid extension of the Gospel, too, shows with what earnestness its members bore testimony to their belief. They talked everywhere about Christ. He was the object of their faith and the subject of their conversation.

As Ramsay puts it, 'The term (Christian) attests that the congregation became a familiar subject of talk, and probably of gossip and scandal, in the city. The name "Christos"

must have been the most prominent in the expressions by which the Greek brethren described or defined their faith to their pagan neighbours. So it came to pass that, whether in contempt or in pleasantry,—or, perhaps, in a more serious vein,—the heathen populace styled the followers of the Saviour "Christians," men connected with Christ and belonging to Him.' As has been well pointed out, the word (*Christianoi*) is itself Greek, while the idea expressed in it is Hebrew and its form is Latin. It was destined to replace all other titles and to become world-wide in its application. (How often does it occur elsewhere in the New Testament, and in what connexion?) As we have seen, it arose from the zealous testimony of the Church. Home Missions are the best preparation for Foreign Missions. Soul-winning work abroad must be preceded by soul-winning work at home. 'If I had the true love of souls, I should long and labour for those around me, and afterwards for the conversion of the Heathen' (Henry Martyn).

Have you ever heard of the Rev. N. Devadasan, a Brahman convert who worked for many years after his conversion as a pastor of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore? Though in charge of a large Christian

congregation, he was an evangelist every inch of him. You would see him with a broad ribbon band across his body, on which were inscribed, in large characters, the letters of the Tamil word *Yésu* (Jesus). He went about everywhere as the witness of the Lord Jesus. If he saw, as he walked along the road, a *bandy* (cart) with people in it, he would run after it and tell its occupants of Jesus. All who knew him felt, in his presence, the power and grace of the Lord Jesus. Like those at Antioch, he was a witnessing Christian.

5. **It was a Generous Church.**—The prophecy of Agabus led to earnest effort and liberal giving. (What was the prophecy, and what do you know of its fulfilment?) The approaching Jewish famine roused the gratitude of the Antiochene Christians, stirred their sympathies, and opened their pockets. We are not to think of their collections as a sudden, impulsive and instantaneous subscription. Chronological considerations show that something like two years elapsed between the prediction and the actual distribution of corn in the famine-stricken districts. There was, therefore, a systematic and sustained collection of contributions for the good cause; and we have here the first instance, in Church history, of a con-

gregation carefully and liberally subscribing funds for the welfare of people living in another land. (Cite other examples from the New Testament. See Romans; 1 Cor.; 2 Cor.) Famine-relief has often played an important part in missionary work. It led to thousands of people putting themselves under Christian instruction in Tinnevelly in A.D. 1877. The missionaries had funds entrusted to them by friends at home for supplying rice and grain to the starving population. This was a practical aspect of Christianity which the most ignorant could understand and appreciate, and was the means of saving many lives. Whilst the well-to-do among the Hindus did little or nothing to relieve those who were perishing of hunger, the missionaries and their Indian fellow-workers passed from place to place feeding the hungry, tending the sick, and taking care of the orphans. 'The conviction prevailed that while Hinduism had left the famine-stricken to die, Christianity had stepped in like an angel from heaven to comfort them with its sympathy and to cheer them with its effectual succour' (Caldwell).

Even men who, from caste pride and other reasons, affect to despise the Gospel, have to acknowledge the force of its philan-

thropy and love. In a conversation held with a Brahman official some years ago, a man of rare intellectual attainments and holding a position of great authority, the talk turned on the claims of our Lord Jesus Christ. When asked what he thought about Christianity, he said, with something of proud complacence, 'Oh! it is very good; but all its best doctrines are contained in Hinduism. *We* have the higher wisdom and philosophy.' When asked again, 'But what about the love which is revealed in the Gospel?' he replied at once, 'Ah! I confess you beat us there. Why! if the car-festival were going on in this town to-day, and some pariah child were to get caught in its huge wheels, there is not a Brahman in the whole place who would defile himself by taking hold of it to try to save it.' And then he went on to narrate how cholera had lately been raging in a low-caste quarter of the town, and, because he was required to furnish Government with statistics connected with the epidemic, he had gone there each night in the dark himself to avoid observation, none of his subordinates being willing to enter such a quarter for fear of caste-defilement.

But the point chiefly to be emphasized, in relation to our present study, is the connexion

between a spirit of liberality and missionary zeal. Those congregations which subscribe liberally to missionary work are never found defective in their contributions to Hospital Sunday Funds and other philanthropic objects. Though the Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevelly, an entirely indigenous Society, collected Rs. 10,158 (£677) for its foreign work last year (1910), its contributions to home objects and self-support increased.

6. **It was a Willing and Obedient Church.** —We mark the note of *consecration*. Either the ministers alone, as some think, or the Christians as a community received a new revelation of God's will while they were actively engaged in their Master's service and giving themselves, in some special way, to prayer and fasting. Possibly, they were seeking guidance as to further developments in the work. At any rate, it was when they assumed the attitude of willing consecration that the missionary call reached them.

The lesson is clear. We must be willing to *do* our Master's will, if we honestly seek to *know* that will. (Give other instances from the Acts of special missionary directions being conveyed to those found in this attitude of readiness. See chs. ix., x., xvi., etc.) There

is a close connexion between consecration and the missionary call. This may be studied, as a special case, in the history of the Keswick Convention movement and its influence either on missionary work as a whole or on individual missionaries like D. M. Thornton in particular.[1]

It must be now some forty years or so since a company of the Hill Arrians of Travancore sent a deputation to the Rev. Henry Baker asking that Christian teachers might be sent them. It happened, just at that juncture, that a young Syrian Christian connected with the C.M.S. had been led, through the influence of an Indian clergyman, to consecrate his life to the Saviour's service. He had told the Master, on his knees, 'Whithersoever Thou sendest me, I will go.' Mr. Baker turned to him in the emergency and asked him to take up this new enterprise. But the emoluments were small, barely enough for food and raiment; and the place proposed was feverish and unhealthy. How could he go? So the offer was declined. That night, however, he had no sleep. It was as though the Saviour looked at him reproachfully and said, 'Did you not pro-

[1] See *Life of D. M. Thornton*, by W. H. T. Gairdner. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

fess to consecrate your life to Me and to be willing to go anywhere for My name's sake?' Young Kuruwella could not resist that Voice. He yielded up himself anew to Christ, and the next morning expressed his willingness to go. And he went, with the result that almost the whole tribe on that part of the hills have turned from Heathenism and drunkenness to Jesus Christ. Was it not worth while?

The *obedience* of the Antiochene Church is equally noticeable with its consecration. The command laid on them was, 'Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' It was their best and most beloved ministers who had to be parted with for God's missionary work. And they were given up at once, gladly and without demur. After further prayer and fasting, a valedictory meeting was held, the first of its kind, and the congregation laid their hands on the missionaries, as though to claim a share in their work and to appoint them as their delegates. They then 'dismissed' them, to use modern parlance; or, as we may better render the words, 'they released them' (from their work at Antioch) and 'bade them farewell.' Are we ready to give our best for God's work abroad, to 'release' our best ministers, to part with our best

friends and nearest relatives? Are we prepared to give to this work, if Christ calls for it, the best of our own life, strength and vigour? The Christians of Antioch continued to regard their 'own missionaries' with special attention and regard, and intercourse and communication with them were well maintained. (Show this.) Here also they are an excellent pattern for us all.

PREPARATION.

Aim.

To decide what are the true characteristics of a Missionary Congregation and to test ourselves by them.

Assignments.

1. From the Epistle to the Ephesians and elsewhere, which of the six characteristics mentioned in the chapter can be definitely stated to be found in the Church at Ephesus?

2. What do you consider to constitute a definite missionary 'call'? How is this opinion borne out by various examples in the Acts?

3. A Christian worker greatly used in the home ministry is seriously considering whether he ought not to become a foreign missionary. Members of his congregation tell him that his place would be very hard to fill. What advice would you give him? Which of the six characteristics of a missionary Church would be involved in your answer?

4. Which of the 'six characteristics' do you

consider is least developed in your own congregation?

[The aim of the present meeting is to utilize the example of the Church of Antioch, and the analysis of its characteristics, for our own instruction and example. The first question helps us more clearly to understand these characteristics by applying them to another Church. Rev. ii. 1–7 and Acts xix. should not be overlooked.

The second and third questions should help to elucidate a difficult but vital problem. A missionary Church should be sending forth missionaries: yet how many of our congregations are doing so? Surely God must be calling enough missionaries. But if so, there must be much misunderstanding of the call.

The last question applies what we have learned and suggests directions for prayer and work.]

Questions for Further Study.

1. By means of the six characteristics test the missionary character of the Churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth.

2. Study Satan's attempts to hinder the work at Antioch, and God's over-ruling providence.

3. Trace the connexion between wholehearted surrender and missionary service in any biographies within your reach (e.g., Brainerd, Martyn, David Hill, Hudson Taylor, D. M. Thornton).

4. What examples of the connexion between

the vitality and the missionary spirit in a Church can be found in Gairdner's *Reproach of Islam*?

5. From a study of the C.M.S. Annual Report, and what is told in this chapter, which of the Churches in India show most signs of a missionary spirit?

6. What do you consider the special missionary qualifications and defects inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race? Apply the principles set forth in the chapter in your determination of them.

7. Why do you think ancient Churches, such as the Coptic Church in Egypt and the Syrian Church in South India, have exerted so little missionary influence during the past thousand years?

A Missionary Designate

'Leave the twaddle of sacrifice for those who do not appreciate the Sacrifice of the Cross. Let the Church give her very best in heart, mind and body for Christ's world-work. The best and greatest of all work requires the best and greatest men. We want men who will thoroughly enjoy all kinds of roughing it.' (*James Chalmers.*)

'I am very happy. Fever is trying, but it does not take away the joy of the Lord, and it keeps one low in the right place.' (*James Hannington, Bishop.*)

'Of all qualifications for missionary work, and every other work, charity is the most excellent.

'Of all plans for ensuring success, the most certain is Christ's own, becoming a corn of wheat, falling into the ground, and dying.' (*Thomas Gajetan Ragland.*)

'The fire of God is upon me to go and preach.' (*James Gilmour.*)

'But, oh, we need power. The deadness of these souls is something awful. Their utter ignorance of what sin is,—the fearful lethargy into which they have fallen,—all reveal that our one great essential is power,—divine, life-giving power.' (*John Kenneth Mackenzie.*)

'What we want first, middle and last is the Holy Spirit.' (*George Pilkington.*)

CHAPTER IV

A MISSIONARY DESIGNATE

Passages for Study: Acts vii. 54–viii. 4; ix. 1–31; xi. 25–30; xxii.; xxvi.; Gal. i. 11–24; Phil. iii. 1–11.

ST. PAUL was designated, by God's wisdom and grace, to be 'the Apostle of the Gentiles.' His is the central figure in the history of the Acts. He was, undoubtedly, the prince of missionaries. The more we study his personality and labours, the more we are impressed with the grandeur of his character and the greatness of his work. We may well regard him as the *typical missionary*, God's great pattern for all those who are called to carry the Gospel to foreign lands. While we fall far short of his attainments, and admire him, so to speak, from a distance, we shall yet do well to study God's ideal, as exemplified

in a real man of flesh and blood, and to aim at approaching, in our measure, the standard thus set before us. This pattern may be studied from many points of view. We might concentrate attention, for example, on his methods of work, or on his care for the Churches, or on his choice and training of fellow-workers.

The aim of this chapter, however, is rather to regard him as a missionary in the making, and to discover what sort of qualifications and equipment are to be desired and developed in those who undertake this enterprise. It will be found that the great Apostle possessed both natural and spiritual qualifications for his special work. While the latter are, of course, all-important, the former are by no means to be ignored. A. M. Mackay wrote words of wisdom to all would-be missionaries, 'Bring with you your highest education and your greatest talents; you will find scope for the exercise of them all.' This does not mean that only the highly educated can be useful in the mission-field. 'God fulfils Himself in many ways.' He chose ignorant fishermen, as well as scholars like St. Paul and St. Luke, for the propagation of the Gospel. But it does mean that those who, like the Apostle of the Gentiles, possess unusual qualifications from

the advantages of birth and education, will find ample scope for them all in missionary work.

1. **Natural Qualifications.**—Dean Armitage Robinson says of St. Paul, 'Alike by birth and training he was peculiarly fitted to be the champion of such a cause. A Jew, born in a Greek city, and possessed of the Roman franchise, he was in his own person the meeting-point of three civilizations.' This witness is true, and gives us the clue to many admirable qualities in the Apostle's life and work. It will suffice here to mention three of these :—

(*a*) *Tenacity.*—The Jews are remarkable, as a people, for tenacity of purpose and persistence in enterprise. They surmount obstacles, succeed in various undertakings, and survive persecutions. Driven from one country, they make their influence felt in another ; there is no more wonderful phenomenon in history than the persistence of the Hebrew race. Now this quality of tenacity and perseverance is invaluable in missionary work ; and we see it constantly displayed in the history of St. Paul. His was 'the purpose ribbed and edged with steel' which nothing served to blunt or turn aside. Of course, it was strengthened and sanctified by divine grace ; but the quality was

there, part and parcel of the man's character.

We see it, before his conversion, in his conduct as a Jew. (Give illustrations from Acts, Galatians and Philippians.) We see it, after his conversion also, in his conduct as a Christian. It stands out in his words. Some of the most purposeful sayings in the whole Bible are found in his speeches and letters. (Cite some of them from Acts xx.; xxvi.; Rom. i.; Phil. iii.; 2 Tim. i.; etc.) It is conspicuous also in his deeds. When he was once convinced of his special mission (show clearly what this was from passages of the Acts), nothing daunted his courage or checked his determined persistence. It survived and surmounted plots, persecutions, perils, stripes, imprisonments, misunderstandings, ridicule, sickness, desertion by friends.

He 'followed the gleam' of his grand vocation in spite of suspicious friends, supercilious sceptics, sectarian bigots, superstitious pagans, self-seeking worldlings, well-intentioned though mistaken fellow-Christians. Right on to the end, his was 'the glory of going on and still to be.' His favourite metaphor clearly expresses it. (What was it? How often, and where, does he use it?) Men and women who lack this quality of 'stick-at-ability,' in some degree at least,

will never make good missionaries. Patient endurance, in the face of obstacles and trials, is indispensable. It should be practised at home so as to stand the severer test abroad.

Now we are not all Jews, but we may cultivate, with God's help, this habit of resolute persistence in God's service. One of the gentlest of converts, a youth of peculiar diffidence and mildness, left his Hindu home about twenty-four years ago to follow Christ. At first, he showed a spirit of yieldingness, and went back with his relatives when they came to fetch him. But he sought help and strength from God, and, after openly allying himself with the Christians of his native town, developed real courage and resoluteness. Unable to live as a true Christian in his heathen home, he came away again, and has never once flinched from that day. He was seen on one occasion standing under the shadow of the large Hindu temple of his native town, witnessing to all who knew him of Christ's salvation. And he has gone steadily ahead in God's service, in spite of difficulties and trials. A long medical training, amongst other things, has tested his capacity for perseverance, and he has stood the test. If an Indian lad of peculiar gentleness of character can, by God's enabling grace,

develop real power of endurance, it ought not to be impossible for members of the Anglo-Saxon race, with the same resources of grace placed at their disposal.

When the Rev. F. Coillard and his devoted wife opened up work among the Barotsi people in the Zambesi region, they encountered untold obstacles. Their journey thither, to begin with, was one long series of disasters,—sickness among their followers, bullocks dying by the road, goods stolen and so on. And when they reached their destination and commenced their work, trouble after trouble followed. One of their fellow-missionaries proved unfaithful; crocodiles got their pigs and dogs, and hyænas seized their goats. When their long expected stores arrived from Paris, box after box was found riddled by white ants, with all the goods destroyed; thieves forced their locks and stole their tents.

But Coillard could write, with calm resoluteness, 'Behind us, these waves seem but small things. God will grant to each of us not merely to hold on but to go from strength to strength'; and his wife could write, 'We have never been so happy in mission work before.' When, again, they had erected their new house, with infinite pain and trouble,

and, to their dismay, it was seen on fire a few days later, Coillard looked round to see what he could save from the burning wreck and cried, 'We must save the harmonium, for we shall yet live to sing.' His letters home are most inspiring all along; and both husband and wife held on bravely to the end and lie buried under a great tree at Sefula in Barotsi-land.

(*b*) *Versatility.*—Though a Jew by race, St. Paul was born and bred in Tarsus, where Greek culture, society and institutions were in vogue. Its University was one of the intellectual centres of the Empire and famous for its teachers of the Stoic philosophy. We know that the Apostle was more or less acquainted with the Greek poets and philosophy. (Do you know any of his quotations from the poets? See Acts xvii.; 1 Cor. xv.; Tit. i.) We also know that his family enjoyed the privilege of the municipal or city franchise, i.e. the Greek citizenship of Tarsus, a privilege confined to a comparatively small section of the population. (Show this, from Acts xxi.) He had, therefore, imbibed a good deal of the Greek spirit,—a spirit characterized by great versatility and readiness in resources; the Greeks were able to adapt themselves with ease to their surroundings.

This quality is strikingly present in St. Paul. (How does he refer to it in 1 Cor. ix. ?) He was equally at home with Jew, proselyte and Gentile. In his company of fellow-workers could be found the Asiatic, the European and the Eurasian. (Give names and proofs. Refer to Acts iv. ; xiii. ; xv. ; xvi. ; xix. ; Gal. ii. ; Col. iv. ; etc.) He could speak, as opportunity occurred, to Hebrew theologians, pagan idolaters and cultured philosophers ; and his words were always suited to his hearers. His speeches before civil authorities show a clear knowledge of their character and history. (Show this, in the case of either Felix or Agrippa II.)

He could adapt himself with ease to the work of witnessing to all sorts and conditions of men, —be they councillors, soldiers, sailors, ministers of religion, Roman officials, men or women. (Give a few examples of this from Acts.) While he never ceased to be a patriotic Jew, he yet proved himself conversant with and capable of adapting himself to the peculiar circumstances and position of Phrygian, Lycaonian, Asian, Macedonian, Grecian, Melitan and Italian.

This quality, again, is most useful to the missionary, and the absence of it accounts

largely for the want of sympathy often observed between the foreign worker and those to whom he ministers. European reticence, rigidity and seeming haughtiness need to be watched and modified. We should cultivate the capacity to understand the attitude of men of alien lands and creeds ; and we should learn to insist as little as possible on our own national customs, systems and Church methods.

Here are two illustrations of the benefit of adaptation to circumstances. In scene number one, a very earnest Syrian Christian is seen, from our seats in a *wallam* (boat) on a Travancore river, to be following, on the river-bank, in the wake of a very dignified Jacobite, evidently burning to speak to him about salvation. We are near enough to land to hear what is being said. How will our friend get into close contact with the stately person whom he longs to tackle ? Presently we hear him monotoning, as he walks behind the man, the Nicene Creed ! The effect was evident. Even the most rigid of Jacobite Christians was satisfied with such a proof of orthodoxy. His hearer's attention was secured, and our friend then proceeded to speak of man's need of a personal Saviour. He had adapted himself perfectly to the position and attitude of the man whom he longed to help.

In scene number two, a large gathering of Hindus is being held in a large iron hall, and a goodly number are assembled. They are orthodox as to national costume, their feet being bare and their clothing confined to a long white loin-cloth, with a graceful piece of muslin or other material thrown over the shoulder. They are Hindus of the Hindus, and their vernacular is Tamil. A convert has been asked to speak to them, a man of considerable parts and with a real experience of God's saving grace. But he has been brought up in a somewhat European style, and wears trousers, boots and stockings. It was suggested to him that, in order to meet the conditions of the audience, he should doff his foreign garb and dress for the occasion in the usual Tamil style. He gladly acquiesced, and borrowed the correct loin and shoulder cloths. And now he is standing on the platform to address the audience, one of themselves as regards dress and outward appearance.

He held the people spell-bound, as he quoted stanzas from the Tamil classics in illustration of his points, and told them, in glowing language, the story of his conversion. He stood there, an Indian of the Indians, and his clear words rang through the hall, ' Friends, we are Indians, the children of the *rishis* (sages and

devotees) who tried to find out God and the way of access to His presence. That way now stands open and revealed in Jesus Christ.' For two nights they hung upon his words. He was asked afterwards whether it would not have sounded rather incongruous to stand before such an exclusively Indian gathering in foreign costume and proclaim himself a ' son of the *rishis* ' ! But he knew how to adapt himself, both in appearance and in language, to his audience, and the effect was striking.

(*c*) *Practical ability*.—In addition to his Hebrew tenacity and his training in Greek culture and versatility, St. Paul derived distinct advantages from his Roman citizenship. (What passages of the Acts state this citizenship ? What use did he make of it ? In which Epistle is it specially reflected ?) This is to be clearly distinguished from the Greek franchise of the ' free city ' Tarsus, and was a far rarer privilege for foreigners to enjoy. It gave him a special status, and frequently procured him the friendship and protection of the imperial officials. (Can you give instances from the Acts ?) It made him a member of a great body politic, one characterized by its grand ideal of universal empire and its power of organization. In this way, to use modern language, the Apostle learned to ' think imperi-

ally.' Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he became a missionary statesman, occupying strategic points, moving upon lines of vantage, conceiving and developing a magnificent plan, 'the Empire for Christ.'

The Romans were noted for their organizing power and practical ability. They made great roads, established a settled peace, promoted facilities for trade and intercourse, carried everywhere a system of law and order, playing the part, in some respects, which Britain plays in the world to-day. We find abundant traces of Roman influence in St. Paul's work. 'There had passed into his nature something of the Roman constructiveness, the power of seeing the means to reach an end in the world of reality and humanity, the quickness to catch and use and mould the ideas and ideals of the citizens of the Empire' (Ramsay, *Pauline Studies*, p. 64). His great conception of the evangelization of the Empire is definitely expressed in one of his Epistles. (Find it out in Rom. xv.)

His conviction of the importance of organization, as also his promotion of it, is clearly evidenced in both Acts and Epistles. (How does this appear, for example, in Acts xiv.; xx.; 1 Tim.?) No one is more decided as to the need of solidarity

or organic unity, a principle which Rome aimed at but failed actually to achieve. Again, his practical nature and common-sense ability are seen in his choice of Silas and Timothy as fellow-workers, in his deterring the Philippian jailor from suicide, in his plan of special collections in the Gentile churches dispatched by trustworthy delegates, in his dealing with the plot against his life (ch. xxiii.), in his conduct on board ship (ch. xxvii.). and in his lending a hand to make a fire at Malta.

Such qualities are most serviceable in missionary work. Many a missionary has to act, at times, as organizer, accountant, builder, doctor and so on. An all-round knowledge of practical things may be turned to good account. When a large new bell from England, ordered for the Mengnanapuram Church in Tinnevelly, was found cracked on arrival, the Rev. John Thomas, a man of unusual practical ability, with the *Encyclopædia Britannica* for his guide, set to work to recast it with the help of Indian artisans and succeeded perfectly. We have not all got his genius for mechanics, but we may all cultivate, with God's help, the application of our knowledge to practical things.

Attention was first called to a most useful Indian worker, then far from being a Christian worker, by seeing the ingenious way in which,

though she had only one arm, she was able to thread, with the help of her foot, a needle which had defied the efforts of those who had diligently used both their hands. It was only a little thing, but it showed there was good stuff in her. She is now not only a most practical helper but also a spiritual force.

When a terrible epidemic of cholera broke out in a village of South India, the Christians of the place begged for special prayer. Their clergyman found, on his way to church, that there was a large cess-pool standing right in the centre of the village, foul enough to account for any epidemic. He pointed it out to the people, and begged for something to be done. That was far too practical for them. They were ready for any amount of prayer, but not for the labour involved in filling up that awful pool. Not for one moment would we depreciate prayer. We need far more of it, but prayer and practice must go together. We shall not do well if we follow the example of some very earnest Christians who, in an Indian prayer-meeting, pleaded to be 'delivered from sanctified common sense.'

2. **Spiritual Equipment.**—Natural qualifications, however useful in their place, are of no avail in themselves for spiritual work: they will not bring the world into captivity to the

obedience of Christ. St. Paul, however, was rich also in spiritual endowments for his special work.

(*a*) *Scripture knowledge.*—The 'sword of the Spirit' is the Word of God, and this prince of missionaries was 'mighty in the Scriptures.' He owed his knowledge of the Old Testament, of course, to his thorough training as a pious Jew. Though his family lived at Tarsus, a city of the Gentiles, his early religious education was carefully attended to. (What passages of the Acts show this? Consult R.V.) Afterwards, as a young man, he underwent a full course of theological instruction in Jerusalem, and became versed both in the Scriptures and in the religious literature of the Jews, being distinguished above all his fellow-students. (Show this from Acts and Galatians. What other instances of early Scripture instruction occur in the New Testament?)

After conversion to Christ, the Bible, as he knew it, became an illuminated Book; and his Scripture knowledge, thus lit up, proved a mighty weapon in missionary work. He used it with convincing power in the various synagogues, in persuading Jews and proselytes and inquirers that Jesus is the Christ. (Write down a list of these synagogues, as mentioned in the Acts. What

was the result in each case ?) His speeches on such occasions display a familiar and thorough acquaintance with the sacred writings and show plainly the object he had in view in citing them. (What passages did he quote at Pisidian Antioch, and to what special end?) When he stood on his defence, he appealed to the authority of Holy Scriptures. (See Acts xxvi.) He counselled his fellow-ministers to make God's Word their rule of life and doctrine. (Show this from Acts xx.; 1 Tim.; 2 Tim.)

In short, his history shows conclusively the necessity, to the missionary of a sound and thorough knowledge of Bible truth. This it is which, applied by the Spirit to the hearts of men, both convinces the unconverted and also confirms converts in their faith. (What passage of the Acts shows this? See ch. xviii.) Ragland of Tinnevelly struck a true note when he wrote to a missionary designate, 'Let your preparation be the study of God's Word, your own heart and the hearts of others.'

A few years ago, a young evangelist of South India was used in kindling the flame of what seemed like religious revival in many places. Men who were at variance with each other withdrew their law-suits from the courts and made up their quarrels. A wave of fervent prayer

swept over the congregations of that district. It looked as though a mighty movement were springing up. And then it all suddenly fell dead. What was the reason? The sword used was not 'the sword of the Spirit.' There was no instruction from God's Word at the meetings. The evangelist, though full of fervour, was ignorant of the Bible and did not know how to lead the people to base their faith and zeal on God's own truth. The consequence was an effervescence for the moment, followed by greater stagnation than before. We cannot attach too much importance to a careful study of the Word of God.

About thirty-five years since, one of the leading Tamil clergy conceived the idea of presenting a copy of the Bible in the vernacular to every Hindu schoolmaster in the part of the district where he lived. A good many copies were thus distributed. Among others, one Hindu accepted a copy in order to find in it difficulties with which to pose the donor. But he reckoned without his host. His questions were easily answered by one who knew his Bible well. This led the Hindu to a more serious and careful study still. As he read, the truth laid hold on him. He became a Christian, and then set to work to win others for his Saviour. He was

the means of the conversion of quite a company of respectable Hindus, amongst them being the Brahman priest of the temple in his native town.

Whatever missionary candidates have or have not in the way of natural advantages, at least let them see to it that they know the Scriptures well. 'The Bible says that the universe was only created six thousand years ago; whereas science asserts that its age must be reckoned by millions of years. Unless you can reconcile such contradictions, we shall not let you preach here,' interposed a proud Hindu objector during a large open-air meeting. The Tamil Bible was handed to him by the missionary, with the request, 'Show me where the Bible states that the universe was created six thousand years ago.' The man took the Bible, turned over a few leaves in a bewildered manner, handed it back to the preacher, and slunk away; the meeting proceeding without further opposition.

(*b*) *Spiritual life.*—The Apostle's history, as a pious Jew, is proof positive of the fact that it is possible to be 'religious' in an eminent degree, and yet to be destitute of real spiritual life. We cannot fail to be struck by the emphasis which is laid in the Acts on the *conversion* of the future missionary. We have

no less than three separate accounts of it, and St. Luke is not in the habit of wasting words. (These should be carefully compared, and the reasons for differences and additions weighed. Use R.V.)

St. Paul himself refers to it, again and again, in his Epistles, loving to dwell on it with warm and glowing gratitude. (Search out references in Gal. ; 1 Cor. ; Phil. ; 1 Tim. ; etc.) To him, it was the real starting point of his life and the first great preparation for missionary work. 'Life first; then service' is a rule plainly exemplified in his history. And this life, imparted at conversion, was continually maintained, nourished and replenished. Neither the fatigues of travel nor the friction due to constant opposition availed to interrupt or retard it. It flowed on and on, deeper and fuller all the time. In one grand passage, in particular, he gratefully acknowledges the grace of continuance. (In which chapter of Acts ?)

The secret of it is not far to seek; it lay in his habit of constant communion with his God and Saviour. We have dwelt already on his Bible study. We know him also to have been a man of prayer. (What episodes of the Acts prove this, and in what connexion ?) On certain definite occasions he is seen retiring

from the company of others to hold private communion with God. (When ? where ?) In seasons of sickness and trial, he went again and again to the throne of grace. (Cite instances from 2 Cor. ; 1 Thess. and elsewhere.)

The reality of a man's faith and spiritual life is nowhere so severely tested as in the mission-field. Only those who are thoroughly converted, and know how to derive life and grace direct from God, ought to embark upon this work. But to such, missionary life brings rich opportunities, ' a more real blessedness in a lonely place, and with less of outside sympathy, which makes all the more room for His ' (Mrs. Polhill Turner).

Ragland of Tinnevelly has already been mentioned in this book. Though it is over fifty years since he passed away, his memory still lives as that of one in whom the life of Christ flowed freely. We were once told by some Hindus how they came across him as little lads. He had pitched his tent in their village, and their sharp Indian eyes soon detected in him a holy man of God. They thought, however, that they would like to put him to the test ; so, when they saw him sitting at his table, with his back to the tent door, they crept silently behind and stuck a pin into him. There was a sudden start. ' Well ! what did

he say or do to you? Was he very angry?' 'Oh no,' they replied, 'he only turned and smiled.' The lads were satisfied. They had found a man whose spiritual life and character could stand the test.

When he died somewhat suddenly, owing to the breaking of a blood vessel, he was ready for his translation to glory. He lay quietly on his bed, looked up sweetly into the Saviour's face, quietly uttered the word 'Jesus,' and then was gone. Here again, Indian eyes were watching. A little Hindu boy was peering through the window. He saw and heard and remembered.

Years afterwards, when a leading Hindu in Sivagási, the place where Ragland died and is buried, lay in the pangs of death, he was terrified and cried aloud in fear. He had no light as he descended into the dark valley. Others tried in vain to comfort him by quoting stanzas from the Hindu Scriptures and mentioning the names of Hindu deities. Then came the friend who, as a little boy, had witnessed Ragland die long years before. In simple language he told the troubled man how the Christian passed away in perfect peace, with a smile of joy upon his face and the name of his Saviour on his lips. The dying Hindu listened in calm

and silence. It was the only thing which seemed to soothe his mind and to still his terror. The incident was pathetic, a Hindu trying to console his fellow-Hindu, in the hour of death, with a description of the Christian's faith and hope, and with the remembrance of a holy man of God whom they had both known and honoured. It shows the influence of a life in which the love and grace of Christ flow freely, a life constantly maintained and nourished by continual communion with Him.

(*c*) *Spiritual power.*—Spiritual life, for God's missionary, must be supplemented by spiritual power. Before entering on evangelistic work, St. Paul was 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' (What verses state this ?) Without this special endowment, he could not be a successful worker. The power to win souls does not lie in natural advantages or intellectual ability, however useful these may be. It is a divine power, and is absolutely indispensable to the true missionary. (What texts in Acts i.–vii. bear this out ?) Only 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'

It was in the power of the Spirit of God that the Apostle entered upon his foreign work, defeated the forces of darkness, formed his plans of action, moved great cities, chose and appointed ministers, proclaimed the word of salvation. (Establish each of these statements

from the Acts.) He realized fully, and taught explicitly, that without the Spirit's enabling grace, no man can either apprehend the Gospel, accept the Saviour, or live a holy life. (Show this from 1 Cor. i.; ii.; vi.; xii.) His letters reiterate constantly the indispensable necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit for assurance of salvation, victory over sin and certainty of coming glory. (See Romans; Galatians.) When addressing fellow-workers, he lays stress on the Paraclete's authority and work. (See ch. xx.) The book of the Acts is full of the Spirit. We meet His name on almost every page, it confronts us at every turn, and St. Paul's missionary history is a clear picture of the working of His energy and grace. Every worker, at home and abroad, ought to be filled with the Holy Ghost; but His almighty power is nowhere more sorely needed than in the mission-field. We are face to face there with the powers of darkness in their most acute forms.

Look at that crowd, for instance, gathered round a devil temple for their annual festival. The image of the demon, a monstrous shape representing a woman treading one child under foot and holding another to her mouth ready to devour it, has been decked with garlands. Many goats have been slain before the shrine, and the blood of some of them drunk warm, as

it flowed from the gashed necks of the victims, by the devil dancers. The weird music, discordant and wild, goes on and on. Several devil dancers, who are supposed to have received the afflatus, are whirling round and round to the strains of the music, faster and faster as the time is quickened. One of the dancers is a woman, with her hair dishevelled and flowing down her back. There is a frenzied look in her excited eyes as she dances frantically round and round. Some of the spectators look on awed. Others seem careless and indifferent. Many have brought their offerings, for they seek in this way recovery from sickness, rain for their crops, or relief from some malignant influence. It is a scene, once witnessed, never to be forgotten ; but it represents the religion of tens of thousands in South India. Satan and his evil spirits seem, in such surroundings, to rule and reign. Is there not a crying need for Christ's messengers to be filled with the Holy Ghost ?

Now look again. A young girl, of legal age, has come to take refuge in a missionary bungalow in the heart of a great town. They will not allow her to follow Christ at home, and so she has had to leave her friends and find protection elsewhere. Her relatives have followed her and request an interview. This is allowed

by the ladies on condition that only women are admitted to the room. They surround her in the bungalow and ply her with arguments, while she refuses to go with them because she has determined to follow Christ.

Suddenly she is seized by the strongest of the women, not a woman at all but a man disguised in feminine attire; and, before the ladies have realized what is happening, she is dragged out of the house and down the street. No help is forthcoming from man, and the poor convert is gone. Did they ever hear of her again? Yes! the last news was of a poor girl put to the torture, the soles of her feet being burned. The last view of her by outsiders was that of one suspended by her arms. And then the curtain falls. We know no more. Are not the dark places of the earth full of the habitations of cruelty? Who is sufficient to cope with such things, but God Himself? Is not our Lord's command reasonable, and more than reasonable, from the point of view of missionary work, 'Tarry ye in this city, until ye be clothed with power from on high'?

PREPARATION

Aim.

To discuss the natural and spiritual qualifications needed for a missionary.

Assignments.

1. Which of the qualifications mentioned here are exemplified in Acts xvii., xviii. ?

2. Let each member choose a missionary and from his life bring examples of these qualifications, and proofs of their being necessary. [Several brief biographies are given in *The Desire of India*, *The Reproach of Islam* and similar books. Penny lives of several missionaries are also obtainable.]

3. Supposing you were set to interview a candidate offering to the C.M.S. what qualifications, natural and spiritual, would you regard as essential ?

Explanation.

The general object of this session is to study from St. Paul's life what are the ideal qualifications of a missionary, and to see how closely they correspond with present-day needs. A further object is for members to test their own lives by means of these qualifications, for in a sense every Christian is a missionary.

In the first question the aim should be to

search for examples of tenacity, etc., and proofs of St. Paul's Bible knowledge, etc. Every indication should be brought forward, not only the most obvious.

For the second question, obvious and striking examples alone need be brought, as the field to be covered is so large. If no biographies are obtainable, each member may select a mission-field and search recent magazines, reports, etc., for examples.

The object of the last question is to bring us closer home. Missionaries are often criticized, but, remembering that no one is perfect, what qualifications are essential? And how would you stand the test yourself?

Further Questions.

1. Write a short paper on St. Paul's qualifications as a missionary.

2. Bring as many illustrations as you can of St. Paul's tenacity, versatility or practical ability from the Acts of the Apostles.

3. Which of these qualifications did St. Paul display in regard to (*a*) the proposed circumcision of Titus, (*b*) the actual circumcision of Timothy?

4. Study the Apostle's Bible knowledge as shown in one or more of the Epistles of his Third Journey (Rom.; 1 and 2 Cor., Gal.), marking the passages which he quotes or refers to, and his method of using them.

5. Bring references from the different Pauline Epistles illustrating his personal prayer life. Make a list of the things which St. Paul prayed for (*a*) for himself, (*b*) for others.

6. Classify the functions of the Holy Spirit, as shown in the Acts, with reference to missionary work.

7. What Old Testament chapters and verses would the Apostle be likely to quote on the occasions referred to in Acts xvii. 2, 3; xviii. 5; xxviii. 23?

8. In the Moslem controversy what questions connected with the Bible chiefly come forward? [See C.M.S. Annual Reports.]

9. What natural qualifications had Timothy for missionary work?

10. Of all the Christians mentioned in the Acts how many are referred to as working in other cities than their own, and how many were home-workers only?

11. What light does the chapter throw on the position of (*a*) business men, (*b*) doctors, considering the claims of missionary work on their lives?

A Missionary Campaign

'I feel more thankful every day for the privilege of being permitted to labour for the Lord where the need is so great.' (*Harold Schofield.*)

'How can I leave these precious souls, for whom there are so few to care?' (*William C. Burns.*)

'Oh! happy lot, to be allowed to bear a part in the glorious work of bringing an apostate world to the feet of Jesus. Glory, glory be to God.' (*Adoniram Judson.*)

'I see nothing in the world worth looking after if it has not a direct reference to the glory and extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.' (*Robert Moffat.*)

'With such an Escort (Ps. xci. 11–16) we can go anywhere.' (*Christina Coillard.*)

'At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands which were once stained with the blood of cannibalism, I had a foretaste of glory that wellnigh broke my heart to pieces. I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze on the glorified face of Jesus Himself.' (*John G. Paton.*)

CHAPTER V

A MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN

Passages for Study: Acts xiii.; xiv.; Gal. i. 1–9; iii. 1–5; iv. 8–20; v. 1–14; vi.

ST. PAUL was what we call nowadays an itinerating missionary. His itinerating tours are described in what are usually termed his missionary journeys, and are full of interest and teaching. In this Chapter, we shall study the first of his eventful itinerations, seeking, in particular, to view it in relation to modern missionary experiences. Itinerating labours are still of the greatest possible importance. They are carried on in divers ways in different countries, by boat, by jinrikshas, by bullock-cart, on foot, on horseback and occasionally even on camel-back. Tents, boats, inns, rest-houses, government bungalows and native huts are all utilized as temporary dwelling-places.

One of the commonest methods in India is that of 'camping out' in tents. We pitch our tent under the shade of a wide spreading mango tree, when such luxury is available, with another tiny tent hard by which is used as kitchen. In places where no shady tree is to be found, as for instance in the almost treeless black cotton soil tracts of North Tinnevelly, the sun pours down upon the canvas, and the heat is often hard to bear, inducing fever and those excruciating pains in every limb and joint which usually accompany an attack of 'sun-fever.'

But, given good shade, tent life is not altogether unpleasant, except that we grow tired of 'living in our boxes,' with no proper place to keep our belongings in. The plan is to visit all towns within five or six miles radius of the tent, preach to all the people in them, and then move on to another camping place. Visitors to our tents are numerous, and many an interesting conversation takes place about the way of salvation. The greatest joy of all is when some earnest inquirer kneels down in the tent and yields himself to Christ; but such an event occurs all too rarely, and the majority of our visitors are actuated chiefly by curiosity, and want to know how much the tent cost, whether

the missionary has a wife and children, and so on.

To return to St. Paul, we find that the great Apostle's land journeys were, most probably, made usually on foot, though he may have used other methods at times, and we know him to have ridden on horse-back on a few occasions. (What was one of these occasions? Acts xxi. 15 was almost certainly another.)

Let us now concentrate attention at once on the principal features of his tour.

1. **Cyprus: a Bitter Opponent.**—After the sea-crossing from Seleucia to Salamis, the missionaries itinerated through the island till they reached Paphos, the political capital and the residence of the proconsul or governor. And here occurred a battle royal. The governor was clearly interested in religion, as appears from the fact that Elymas the Magian was attached to his suite just as we often find a Brahman astrologer connected with the court of an Indian prince to-day. He heard of the itinerants and sent for them to come and preach. Possibly his heart was yearning for a purer faith. Then came the tug of war. Elymas represented a system which had cast a spell over the Roman world, a blend of pseudo-science and sorcery with religious superstition.

He was astrologer, exorcist, magician and fortune-teller all in one. (What other traces of this system occur in Acts ?) Every motive of self-interest urged him to resist the Gospel. (Cite other examples of opposition from self-interest in Acts.)

He was all the more dangerous an antagonist because, being a Jew, he could doubtless quote, or misquote, the sacred Scriptures. (What other proofs have we in the New Testament that the Jews sometimes practised heathen magic ?) In bitter earnest he withstood the Christian preachers. The Gospel and heathen magic contended for the mastery ; and the issue was not doubtful. The judicial ' mist and darkness ' which fell on the Magian were an emblem of the eclipse of all such false and occult systems. The sorcerer was worsted ; the Gospel triumphed ; the proconsul ' believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord ' (not merely at the miracle). (What other individuals resisted St. Paul's work and with what result ?)

Modern missionaries are often withstood by similar systems. These are sometimes championed by individuals whose one object is to stop Christian preaching. A parallel to the Sergius Paulus episode is found in the opposi-

tion offered to Mackay and his companions at Mtesa's court in Uganda by Mohammedans and French Jesuits.[1] The disputation at Agra of the moulvie Rahmat Allah with Messrs. Pfander and French has become historic.[2]

Some years ago, a 'Hindu Tract Society' champion fiercely opposed every effort to preach the Gospel in a city of Southern India. He held rival preachings close to the places where the missionaries and their helpers were proclaiming Christ in the streets, in order to excite the crowd against them. He disseminated Hindu tracts and literature of a very obnoxious character, reviling our Saviour and His Gospel and chiefly based on atheistic books imported from the West. He left no stone unturned in his efforts to exterminate the Christian religion, root and branch. It is interesting to note how all this fury ended. The Hindus of the town became tired of supporting him. His supplies ran short. He was compelled to come and beg his railway-fare home again from the very missionaries whom he had constantly maligned.

In another town, the Brahmans endeavoured

[1] *A. M. Mackay*, by his sister (Hodder & Stoughton).
[2] Stock's *History of C.M.S.*, vol. ii., 170–1.

to stop the work by setting up as their spokesman in discussion a man who, while believing in demons, sorcery and astrology, yet knew the Bible and tried to ask awkward questions as to whether children dying in infancy could be saved, and suchlike unpractical topics. It was a curious scene. We had gathered in a Hindu temple, and the image of Ganesh, the 'elephant god,' was standing close by in all his ugliness. The Hindu champion claimed that idolatry is necessary for all but the most enlightened, the images and emblems reminding them of God and His character, just as a photograph reminds us of unseen friends. When asked what such a figure as that of Ganesh could possibly remind men of except the impure stories as to his birth and origin and form narrated in the Puranas, he had no defence to make. He knew full well that the beings described in those stories are wide apart from the one true and living God, holy and pure and righteous.

Many a missionary has had personal encounters with angry Buddhist orators, or Mohammedan antagonists, or Arya-Samajists. We learn from St. Paul that the way to meet such attacks is to be 'filled with the Holy Ghost' and to declare faithfully 'the teaching

of the Lord.' (Give other examples from Acts of missionaries, when opposed, relying on God's Spirit and the power of His Gospel.)

2. **Pisidian Antioch: a Mixed Population.** —The missionaries travelled by sea from Cyprus to Perga, and thence by road to Antioch. Their path lay over the rough Pisidian mountain lands, which were full of dangers and infested by brigands. (Where are the perils of this journey referred to ?) *En route,* they crossed the boundary of the Roman province of Pamphylia into that of Galatia, in which Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were *politically* included. Antioch really belonged, from a *national* point of view, to Phrygia, though it was popularly spoken of as 'Pisidian.' Its population included many native Phrygians; a strong Greek element, since it was founded by the Grecian monarch Seleucus Nikator; a Roman contingent, for it was a Latin 'colony'; and a large number of Jews. It was therefore a good seed-plot for the cosmopolitan Gospel of Christ. It was, moreover, under the Romans, the centre of government administration for the southern part of the Galatian province.

The missionaries appear to have been detained there by St. Paul's severe illness. (Proof from Epistle to Galatians ? What other

references occur to his constitutional malady ?) Then followed his memorable sermon in the synagogue, of which the main heads were (*a*) a Saviour promised, (*b*) a Saviour provided and (*c*) a Saviour presented. (Show that the sermon divides itself into these heads.) This led to experiences which present distinct stages :—(i.) The instruction of a large number of inquirers, Jews and proselytes. (ii.) The awakening of wide-spread interest among the Gentiles of the city. (iii.) The opposition of the Jews, from racial and religious jealousy. (iv.) The concentration, for the first time, on work among the Heathen. (v.) The spread of the Gospel in the 'region' or county (in Indian parlance, *zillah*), of which Antioch was the county town. (vi.) The arising, in consequence, of bitter persecution, ending in the expulsion of the missionaries from Antioch and its environs. (Show, from the narrative, that each of these stages is clearly marked.)

In this persecution, their Jewish opponents were assisted by the city magistrates who were influenced by Gentile ladies, semi-proselytes. The preachers were, possibly, beaten also by Roman lictors. (What reference occurs, in an Epistle, to such beatings with the rods of lictors ?) Racial jealousy, on the part of the

Jews, was the determining factor in the opposition, this time. The main result of the work was that ' the first thoroughly Gentile congregation, separate from the synagogue, was established at Pisidian Antioch ' (Ramsay).

Work in India presents features which are, in some respects, parallel. The religious and caste pride of the Brahmans often leads to open opposition : they are unwilling to see the lower classes (as they regard them) embrace the Gospel. One day, when a large crowd had gathered in a village, drawn from various sections of the community, to listen to the message of salvation, and were, apparently, hanging on the words of the preacher, there was a sudden commotion and the crowd scattered right and left. An enraged Brahman had rushed out of his house, with a heavy piece of cloth in his hand, and was angrily beating the people with it for daring to give heed to Christian teaching.

In another village, where the people had lost faith in Hinduism and had voluntarily sent for us to come and explain the Gospel message, with the result that a number of them were led to embrace it, we had no sooner left the place than the Brahman landlord from a neighbouring town appeared upon the scene with his servants and followers, and sought, by fair

means and foul, to deter the people from their purpose. Men of his class, for the most part, feel instinctively that Christianity is likely to prove subversive of their exclusive authority and power over the masses; and so, like the Jews of Antioch, in their pride of race and religion, seek to prevent its spread.

In China, again, it has often been the mandarins who, in their anti-foreign zeal, have promoted violent persecution of the missionaries and converts. Yü Hsien, of Boxer fame, the governor of the province of Shansi, who entrapped so many missionaries into his yamen and put them cruelly to death, is a notorious example. In Persia, while the strict Mohammedans withstand the truth, the Babís and Súfis often give an attentive hearing to Christ's Gospel. Mixed populations, as at Antioch, contain both violent opponents and willing hearers; and it is generally racial jealousy and sectarian pride which determine the character of the opposition.

3. **Iconium: a Vehement People.**— The missionaries journeyed from Pisidian Antioch to Iconium along what was called 'the imperial road,' the distance being about eighty miles. Whether they went on foot or otherwise, we cannot say. Iconium was an important com-

mercial town. Like Antioch, it was Phrygian, from the *national* point of view (though closely associated with Lycaonia). Roman and Greek influence were not so strong, by far, as at Antioch; but Jews were numerous. Some of the characteristics of the work at Antioch were reproduced here also. (Compare the two as regards work in the synagogue, labours outside the synagogue, and growing opposition.)

The chief feature, however, emphasized in the narrative is the fervency and vehemence of the Iconians. From the first, interest was aroused, and division ensued, both among Jews and Gentiles. The synagogue was moved and divided; so was a wider company; and so, at last, was the whole city. (Verify this.) Every one took sides; no one was apathetic or indifferent. The town was ranged in two opposite camps. Those who were not for Christ were actively against Him; and the opposition united forces which normally worked in contrary directions. The hostile party, Jews, pagans and authorities, combined to foster a public riot, with murderous intent; and the missionaries retired from the place for the time being. (What verses of Scripture support their action in so doing? From what other cities was St. Paul obliged to retire?)

Here, again, are features not uncommon in modern missionary work. The Gospel often acts as a dividing force. (What passages in the Epistles,—e.g. 1 Cor. ; 2 Cor. ; Phil.,—confirm this ?) Some of us have seen whole towns or villages ranged round the Hindu (or Buddhist) preacher on the one hand and the Christian evangelist on the other hand. A mission-school which produces converts is opposed by the opening of a rival anti-Christian school. When a young Brahman student in one of our high schools came out for Christ, the whole town was divided. Some of the Hindus, partly from respect for the headmaster, partly from higher reasons, still held by the mission-school ; while the majority of the Brahmans and their followers, stirred up still further by the local Hindu lawyers, offered the most strenuous opposition and sent emissaries to every street to forbid attendance at the Christian school and to compel adhesion to its Hindu rival. The conversion of a second student, following almost immediately on the former one, added fuel to the flame ; and, though most of the violent antagonism has died down, the town still shows clearly divided camps.

We may note, also, that incongruous elements sometimes combine, as at Iconium,

It was so in Uganda, where 'the king's caprice, the slanders of the Arabs, and the opposition of the French priests combined' to cause trouble to Mackay, Litchfield and Pearson.[1] Romanists helped the advocates of Islam in the famous Agra disputation alluded to above.[2] A leaf from personal experience tells how, during an open-air preaching to Hindus in a very bigoted country town, a troublesome objector stepped forth from the heathen crowd in the person of the local Roman Catholic catechist who plied us with questions about the supremacy of Peter and the salvation of Protestants. It was not difficult to answer his questions; but it was sad to see that he would rather have men worship demons than accept our Gospel.

Once more, it has happened sometimes, that spheres of missionary labour have had, as at Iconium, to be left by Christ's missionaries, for a time at least. It was so in Madagascar where the cruel queen Ranavalona, on coming to the throne in 1828, closed the island to foreign missionaries and embarked on a fierce persecution of the Malagasy Christians.

[1] *History of C.M.S.*, vol. iii., 107.
[2] *Ibidem*, vol. ii., 170–1.

A more recent example is that of the Chinese Boxer movement when station after station in the inland provinces had to be left for a period till the storm had passed. In one town, the missionary was stripped and expelled, only escaping with great difficulty after his persecutors had taunted him by saying, 'Christian! we have burned all your churches and are going to murder all your disciples. Where now is your God?' He replied, in the calm assurance of faith, 'Wait a little while, and you will see more churches than ever and a growing company of Christians; and then you will know that my God is living and powerful.' In that very town there is now a new church and a constantly growing Christian congregation.

4. **Lystra: a Superstitious Community.**— Lystra was only eighteen miles S.S.W. of Iconium, and was situated in a comparatively retired spot, some miles distant from the great Overland Route (see Chap. I). It belonged to that western part of the country of Lycaonia which was included in the Galatian province. It was a Roman 'colony,' and so both Latin and Greek influence were present; but its population was mainly Lycaonian, comparatively uneducated and under the sway of crude pagan

superstitions. Jews were few in number, as appears from the fact that no synagogue is mentioned there. A striking miracle of healing stirred to its depths the superstitious reverence of the people. (Do you know any similar incidents in Acts?) They prepared to treat the missionaries as divine beings. (Why did they give precedence to Barnabas? Why did not the Apostles stop them at once?) A procession was formed, with oxen, garlands and the usual paraphernalia of idolatry; and the priest of Jupiter was on the point of offering sacrifice.

It was only then that the missionaries rent their clothes and begged them to desist. (What is the rending of clothes an emblem of? Cite other instances of it.) St. Paul seized the opportunity to tell them of the true and living God, His unity, His omnipotence, His patience, His beneficence, His invitation, His Gospel. (Trace these points in his address. Use R.V.) It was just such an address as a missionary might give under similar circumstances to-day. (How would you meet the objection that there is, apparently, nothing in it about Christ and salvation?) Those who know what heathen processions are, with their musical accompaniments, noise and excitement,

can appreciate St. Luke's words, 'scarce restrained they the multitude.'

Superstitious people are generally excitable and somewhat fickle. (Do you know any other instance of this in Acts?) Jewish emissaries from Antioch and Iconium (how many miles had they travelled?) easily perverted their minds and persuaded them to allow St. Paul to be stoned. He was, however, miraculously preserved from death. (How often do we know his life to have been attempted?) Possibly, this new miracle once more overawed them, for he was allowed to spend the night there and to depart quietly next day. He left converts behind (proofs?), and so his sufferings were fruitful for the cause.

The story of Lystra is often repeated, in its main features, in the mission-field. A scene is vividly present to our mind, when, having gone to preach in a large village, we saw a heathen crowd approaching in procession with music and drums. They were carrying, as an offering to their temple, the first shoots of their springing crops, to propitiate their god and to ward off his envy and anger. When they caught sight of a white face, they gathered round us, as we stood on a sort of raised platform, made the most profound *salaams*, and were ready to

show us the utmost deference. Possibly, they feared that our presence might interfere with the merit of their special offerings unless they placed themselves on good terms with us. Anyhow, they stood and listened while we read to them this very account of St. Paul's address to a similar pagan procession at Lystra and pleaded with them to 'turn from these vanities unto the living God.'

The old scene at Lystra seemed to live again that day, as we gazed over the excited crowd, bent on offering their first-sprouts to their demons, and ignorant of the fact that it is the great Father of mankind Who gives 'us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'

All through India, preaching at Hindu fairs and car-festivals is a regular part of missionary work.[1] Sometimes, as at Lystra, the evangelists suffer personal violence. One of the Tinnevelly colporteurs to-day is a man who, as a bigoted Heathen, took up stones to stone the missionary in just such a preaching. It was getting dusk, and the man was bent on mischief. But, somehow, God's hand restrained

[1] *Things as They Are*, ch. xxiii. (Morgan & Scott.)

him, and he and his family are now Christians, including a brother-in-law who swore that, whatever happened, he would never become a follower of Christ. One of China's inland cities, now containing a church and flourishing congregation, saw its first evangelist seized, beaten and expelled, his books being torn to shreds and scattered to the winds.

Temples, idols, priests, processions, victims, garlands, sacrifices, wild shoutings in the vernacular, all these still abound; and the missionary goes on telling idolaters and fetish-worshippers 'good tidings' about the 'living God,'[1] since the deities they worship are chiefly demons and dead men who are now, from either fear or reverence, treated as divine and propitiated with constant offerings.

5. **Derbe: a Quiet Audience.**—Derbe was thirty miles S.E. of Lystra, and was situated on the main highway of travel. It was a frontier town, on the border of the Galatian province. Beyond it lay a large native state. Its importance consisted chiefly in its frontier position. The fact that St. Paul journeyed thither the very day after the cruel stoning

[1] *Overweights of Joy*, chs. iii., iv. (Morgan & Scott.)

shows, of itself, the miraculous character of his recovery. The work in Derbe seems to have been like a calm after a storm. Doubtless, much more happened there than appears in the narrative; but the impression left on the reader is that there was no violent opposition. They 'preached the Gospel there' and 'made many disciples.' (Do we know any of these by name?)

Similarly, the missionary of our own days often finds an audience prepared to listen to his message, even though they may not be eager to accept it.

We may instance the commencement of the Chuki Mission in China where Archdeacon Moule was gladdened on his first visit by finding a ready audience of inquirers, the fruit of the work of a man called Chow, who heard and embraced the Gospel at a preaching-chapel in Hangchow.[1] Or we may cite the case of Mr. Painter's reception by a section of the Hill Arrians of Travancore, when the chief and people, after quietly listening to his message, placed themselves under instruction. 'I believe,' said the chief, 'that what we have heard is true; and I intend to serve

[1] *Story of the Chekiang Mission.* (C.M.S.)

this God and Saviour.' The present favourable attitude of the Bakhtiaris in Persia may serve as another illustration of the Derbe episode.[1]

Only a few years ago we found a village in Tinnevelly in a similar attitude of receptivity. Every house we visited was filled with a willing audience, and the whole village gathered to the torchlight preachings by night. The result was a Christian congregation which has been constantly receiving accessions ever since. Truth, however, compels the statement that such a spirit of ready receptivity is rather the exception than the rule; and it is often from more opposing places that the best converts are won.

Paul and Barnabas did not cross the Roman frontier and return to Syria by the 'Cilician Gates' (vide Chap. I). It may have been too late in the year to cross the mountains by that route. More probably, they were actuated by a desire to consolidate the work so happily begun. They returned, therefore, to Perga *via* Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. Their work in the new churches assumed a four-fold shape: confirmation (of faith), exhortation (to continuance), ordination (of ministers), and commendation (to the Lord). Every

[1] *C.M.S. Annual Report*, 1909–10, pp. 94–5.

missionary knows the importance of attending to these matters in infant Churches. (Show the meaning of each of the four, and the necessity. On what other occasions did St. Paul revisit these churches, and why? What other references occur in Acts to ordination and Church organization?)

Thus evangelization was followed by organization, and the newly-lit lamps were left, so to speak, trimmed and brightly burning.

PREPARATION

Aim.

To enter into the varied experiences of evangelistic missionaries and to learn how to pray for them.

Assignments.

1. What can you gather from the Epistle to the Galatians as to (*a*) the character of the people themselves, (*b*) the circumstances under which St. Paul first preached to them? Compare the answers with his experiences of Iconium and Lystra.

2. Taking the five places mentioned in order, which of the 'fruits of the Spirit' mentioned in Galatians v. 22, 23 are specially called for and manifested in each?

3. Bring examples from the modern mission-field corresponding to the first and last of the experiences mentioned in this chapter.

4. Had you been St. Paul's companion on this journey, which of the experiences recounted would have proved specially trying to you?

Explanation.

The general aim of this study is to see the need for prayer for evangelistic missionaries (European and native), and to know how to

direct our prayers in order that they may be most effective and practical.

The first question throws an interesting side-light upon St. Paul's experiences, and is an important evidence of the truth of the Bible story.

The second shows up clearly how much these gifts of the Spirit are needed in missionary work. The next question helps us to see, as in previous studies, how like modern Missions are in their essentials to those of early days.

The last question is most vital. Only as we put ourselves in the missionary's place can we rightly sympathize with him and pray for him.

Further Questions.

1. Make an outline map, filling in the places visited in this tour.

2. What part did miracles play in this journey? Are they reflected in the Epistle to the Galatians and if so, how?

3. From what classes does the chief opposition to missionary work come in China, India, Egypt and Central Africa?

4. What points specially mentioned in St. Paul's missionary commission given at his conversion (compare the various accounts) are illustrated in this narrative?

5. Relying on the authority of Acts xiii.

xiv., how would you meet the following statements :—

(*a*) Christianity is too spiritual a religion for the lower races ; idolatry suits them better.

(*b*) The conception of one true and living God is the product of a slow evolution in the mind of man.

(*c*) So long as the life of Christ remains, we need not mind the destructive criticism of the Old Testament.

6. What do you learn from St. Paul's example as to the comparative importance of evangelistic, medical, educational and pastoral missionary work ?

7. Contrast St. Paul's mode of address to the various classes mentioned in the narrative (five instances occur). Show its correct appropriateness in each case.

8. Work out St. Paul's second itinerating tour on a similar plan, noticing new conditions and experiences (e.g. Athens, an attitude of superior indifference, Berea, a zealous interest, etc.).

A Missionary Problem

'This African problem must be solved; in God's name it shall be solved; for God means it to be solved.' (*Alexander M. Mackay.*)

'Oh! do pray for us out here, that we may be kept very near to the great Saviour, to know His methods better, to be filled with His Spirit, and to be ever listening to His teachings.' (*John Kenneth Mackenzie.*)

'If any qualification seems necessary to a missionary in India, it is wisdom, operating in the regulation of the temper and the due improvement of opportunities.' (*Henry Martyn.*)

'Our heavenly Father would not permit these embarrassments, if He Himself had not provided.' (*François Coillard.*)

'It is easy and happy service when One mightier than man is our Helper. Our sufficiency is of God. May the day never come when I shall think sufficiency is of self.' (*Frederick C. Roberts.*)

'The burden of my song must be PRAISE; and the teaching of every lesson has been TRUST.' (*James Hannington, Bishop.*)

CHAPTER VI

A MISSIONARY PROBLEM

Passages for Study: Acts xv. 1–35; xxi. 17–25; Gal. ii. 1–10; Rom. iii; Eph. ii. 10–22; iii. 1–10.

AS missionary work proceeds, and converts are gathered in, problems of various kinds arise calling for wise solutions. We have examples of such problems in the Acts, some connected with Church contributions, some with pastoral oversight, some with the suitability or otherwise of workers, others with questions of conformity with national and religious customs, and others with missionary extension. (Give an instance, or instances, of each of these.) The problem of problems, however, of that period was that of the admissibility of the Gentiles into the Christian Church on equal terms with Jewish believers, without

distinction and without circumcision. In other words, it was the racial problem. It is not easy for us to realize the gravity and acuteness of the difficulty as it appeared to Jewish eyes. Christ was, in their conception, the Messiah of their favoured race. The Christian Jew was prepared to admit the Gentile believer to Church fellowship, but only on condition that he entered through the door of circumcision and conformed to Mosaic institutions. To put it plainly, one of an alien race must become a Jew in order to become a Christian.

Hence, the battle raged round this question throughout the history of the Acts. It required a special revelation to induce even a leading Apostle to believe that the door of God's mercy stands wide open to all believers. Even after such a revelation, St. Peter acted against his new convictions. (When ? where ? how ?) To St. Paul himself, the free admission of the Gentiles was a stupendous ' mystery ' or ' secret,' laid bare to him by God. (What does he say about this ' mystery,' e.g., in the Epistle to the Ephesians ?) Only by degrees did he grasp himself its real meaning. (Show this, for example, from Acts xxii.) As it dawned more and more clearly on him, he obeyed ' the heavenly vision,' at the cost

of obloquy, persecution and personal liberty. The word ' grace ' assumed a new meaning to him : it came to denote that ' surprising mercy of God by which those who had been wholly outside the privileged circle were now the recipients of the divine favour ' (Dean Armitage Robinson). (Trace this new meaning of ' grace' in either Acts xi.–xxviii. or Ephesians, or both.)

In different forms the old problem still survives. We see it in the ' caste question ' of India, which is giving trouble even in the Christian Church. Until a few years ago, when banns were called in our Tinnevelly churches the caste titles of the bridegroom and bride's father were added to their names, and a good deal of opposition was encountered when it was decided that they must henceforth be discontinued within the walls of God's house. The Roman Catholics, in some places, have different church buildings for converts from different castes and allow their Christians of Brahman origin still to wear the sacred thread which is the badge of Hindu Brahmanism.

The question is continually confronting us in South India. A recently ordained Tamil clergyman and his wife went off to take charge of the pastorate to which he was appointed with considerable fear and anxiety because

they had heard that their future flock objected to their coming as being of different class origin to themselves. We have known a Christian schoolmaster's wife terrified lest a man of what she thought lower 'caste' origin than herself should pollute her little child by touching it in its cradle. And the day still lives in memory when the teacher in a certain village, who had been very attentive to us until then, disappeared from sight when we went to visit our fellow-Christians in a quarter which he regarded as too low for his presence. These things are mentioned to show that the old spirit of caste pride is still very much in evidence in many quarters, and to elicit prayer that, like an evil demon, it may be expelled by the power of Christ.

The problem in question, however, is by no means confined to caste distinctions in India. We meet with it also in the 'colour question' of America, in the 'native question' of South Africa, and in the 'racial question' of other European colonies. We 'whites' are far from guiltless in the matter. We are all slow to learn, in practice, that in Christ Jesus there is, and there can be, neither Jew nor Greek, neither Boer nor Zulu, neither American nor Negro, neither Englishman nor Indian, neither Brah-

man nor Pariah. The watchword of the Gospel is 'catholicity, not caste; solidarity, not race.'

1. **The Controversy** (Acts xv. 1–3).—When Paul and Barnabas returned from Galatia to Antioch, they related their experiences, and announced, in particular, that God 'had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles' (xiv. 27). This was the great feature of their first missionary tour. Clearly, it excited the utmost interest in the Church of Antioch, many members of which were themselves converted Gentiles. It also provoked opposition from the circumcision party in Jerusalem, some of whom arrived upon the scene and vigorously contested the new departure. (Trace the attitude of this party in Acts xi.; xxi.) They insisted that Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The point at issue was plain and definite; it was 'the door of faith' versus 'the door of circumcision.' Men were in earnest on both sides, and a sharp controversy ensued. There was 'no small dissension and disputation.' The problem was vital and must be solved. What steps were taken to that end?

(*a*) *A conference was agreed upon.* The subject must be properly thrashed out, and, if possible, a satisfactory concordat reached.

This was a wise determination, and one according to the mind of Christ. Two or three years ago, when a strong difference of opinion showed itself among the leading missionaries, both Indian and foreign, who are labouring in the Telugu country of South India, as to the rendering of certain terms of the Bible, including the sacred name Jehovah, into the vernacular, the Bible Society wisely arranged a conference at which both sides were able to represent their difficulties and to discuss together possible lines of agreement. In a similar manner representatives of various Missions and Churches met together recently in Central India to endeavour to agree as to the adoption of a common basis of belief and Church organization, so as not to perpetuate in India the endless divisions of Western Christianity. All such conferences are, surely, good and right. (We read of four Jerusalem conferences in Acts. What were they, and what did they consider ?)

(*b*) *Due regard was paid to corporate unity and order.* Both sides agreed to go ' unto the Apostles and elders about this question.' This does not mean that the latter were regarded as a sort of papal and infallible authority. St. Paul was always careful to defend his independence, and would never yield to any man in

vital matters. (Prove this from the Epistle to the Galatians.) But it does mean that great deference was paid to the opinion and advice of those in authority at headquarters. When grave danger of division arose in an important church of Southern India, representatives of the two parties, the more conservative and the more progressive sections, happily took advice and discussed the matters at issue in a friendly spirit with their Church authorities. The conference led to a *modus vivendi* which has worked well ever since.

(*c*) *The utmost reliance was placed on God's will and leadings.* The missionaries reiterated again and again what God 'had done with them' (xiv. 27; xv. 3, 4). Prejudice must yield to facts. In every phase of work, God's will must rule. It helped materially to an agreement that stress was laid not upon 'Pauline methods' but upon divine guidance and approval. It was said of a Tamil evangelist who was greatly used of God years ago, though he may have displayed at times what some would regard as 'irregularities,' and said too by a missionary whose type of Churchmanship differed widely from that of the man of whom he spoke, 'We want men of his stamp. God made much use of him.'

These three great principles, friendly conference, regard for corporate unity and order and a clear setting forth of God's leadings and doings, will guard us, respectively, against needless division, excessive individuality and mutual misunderstanding in our work. Controversies have arisen, and still arise, over mission comity, methods of work, Church discipline and so on. We still need to resort to the procedure above described.

2. **The Council** (xv. 6–29).—The council proper seems to have been preceded by two important events.[1] A futile attempt was made by the circumcision party to beg the question at issue by insisting on the circumcision of Titus; and a private conference was held between the missionaries and the heads of the Church at Jerusalem. This cleared the air. When the council actually assembled, there was at first a sharp division of opinion and 'much disputing' or 'questioning.' But the sound of altercation was soon hushed, and the forces of truth and love prevailed. We have here a model, in this willingness to cease from strife, for all Missionary Conferences, Church

[1] It is assumed here that Gal. ii. 1–10 refers to St. Paul's third visit to Jerusalem as described in Acts xv., though Ramsay and others refer it to his second visit.

Councils and Ecclesiastical Synods. Memory recalls a gathering of workers in India at which there seemed likely to be a collision between the Indian members and the foreign missionaries, with the possibility of a strong cleavage of opinion calculated to lead to unhappy results. The crisis was met in the spirit of love on both sides, and the resolutions of the conference were practically unanimous. While it can never be right to yield a vital principle, it must always be right to meet differences of opinion in the spirit of love and to avoid, as far as possible, unworthy strife. Several features stand out prominently in connexion with this council of Jerusalem.

(*a*) *The presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost* were expected, realized and acknowledged. (Which verse proves this ?) They had met on His business and must act under His control. A deep consciousness of this will make a difference in all discussions and affect all decisions and conclusions. (What promises of the Gospels would justify their expectation ? Which of His functions and gifts were most required ?) Some of us can never forget a memorable meeting of Christian workers held during the session of a Convention for the deepening of the spiritual life of the Indian Churches in a

certain district of India. The Holy Spirit's presence was felt in a remarkable manner, and the result was a drawing of heart to heart and a humbling of all that was human, with power and blessing for the whole Convention. It was one of those occasions which give new force and meaning to the words, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' We could no more doubt His presence and touch than we could doubt our own existence.

(*b*) *The authority of Holy Scripture* was respected and submitted to; its testimony was accepted as decisive. (Show this.) It was shown clearly that the Old Testament had foretold grace and salvation for the Gentiles. (What three dispensations are indicated in order in St. James's quotation?) Where the Bible, in its plain meaning, is acknowledged as the ultimate court of appeal, unity becomes possible. We met on one occasion in South India for an important conference, at which questions of policy had to be faced and decided on. It was known beforehand that different members held, and held strongly, views on the matters under consideration which seemed to be incompatible; and the chairman of the conference expected a somewhat heated altercation. The proceedings, however, opened with a Bible-

reading ; and the words of God's book laid hold of all present. When the discussion began, it found us all under that sacred influence, and there was no heated altercation but only friendly deliberation, with unanimous conclusions.

(*c*) *The evidence of facts* was emphasized and honoured. This occupied an important place in the procedure of the council. Three at least of the four most prominent speakers dealt mainly with missionary facts. (Who were they ? What did they say ?) Theory and prejudice had to yield, when true witness was borne to God's will and work. What was the use of arguing about the position of the Gentiles under the new dispensation, when it was proved by reliable witnesses that God had declared for their admission on equal terms with His favoured people ?

(*d*) *The sufficiency of faith* was insisted on and proved. One of the simplest creeds in the whole Bible is found in chapter xv. (What is it ?) It was shown that it is faith, not circumcision, which produces purity, deeper purity than ceremonial observances can ever give. (Make this clear. What text in Acts xxvi. bears it out ?) It was claimed that salvation is, on God's side, all of grace ; and, on

man's side, all of faith. (A verse in Ephesians puts this in a nutshell. What is it ?) In this really consists the great difference between the Gospel and all the religions current among non-Christians. Those religions, one and all, offer their benefits as a reward for human works of merit. We, on the contrary, offer a full and free salvation, without any works of human merit, to every sinner who, to use Indian language, comes for refuge to 'the lotus feet' of Jesus Christ, trusting His finished work.

A young Hindu who had in his heart, as he expressed it, 'a thirst like the thirst for water,' after visiting temple after temple in his search for merit, and learning stanza after stanza from the pages of Hindu religious poets, one night, outside a little village church, heard the sound of singing and the voice of preaching. The hymn was a free Tamil rendering of

> Jesus is calling the weary to rest;
> Calling to-day, calling to-day.
> Bring Him thy burden and thou shalt be blest,
> He will not turn thee away.

As he heard the story of the Cross, his eyes were opened to see the way of salvation. He followed the preacher to his tent, and, kneeling down, accepted, in simple trust, the gift of pardon and eternal life. These four out-

standing features will help us, in any conference, to avoid the mistakes, respectively, of human combativeness, self-opinionatedness, prejudiced judgment and insistence on non-essentials.

3. **The Concordat** (xv. 19–20, 22–29).—The council, happily, arrived at a unanimous conclusion. A concordat was agreed upon which was satisfactory, for the time at any rate, to all concerned. This decree may be termed the *magna charta* of Gentile liberty.

(*a*) *It declared for the door of faith, as against the door of circumcision,* so far as the Gentiles were concerned. Admission to Christ, and through Him to His Church, was pronounced to be by faith and faith alone. (Show how this is reiterated and worked out in Epistle to the Galatians. Why in *that* Epistle ?)

(*b*) *It acknowledged the abolition, in Christ, of all distinctions between Jew and Gentile.* Noble words were spoken which were at least reflected in the letter of the council. It was stated that God ' made no distinction between them and us,' and that ' we shall be saved . . . in like manner as they.' The wall of partition was broken down for ever. (Find the passage of Ephesians in which this wall is mentioned. What does the metaphor refer to ?) Those words ' making no distinction ' still ring on, and

we need to act on them more fully in missionary operations.

(*c*) *It pronounced in favour of liberty from ceremonial yokes.* The Jew had no right to impose his national and ecclesiastical customs and traditions on Gentile believers. They were not of the essence of the Gospel. And we are warned hereby to beware of oppressing the infant Churches of the mission-field with our own national rules and customs and ecclesiastical systems and accretions. We Westerners often carry to eastern lands denominational shibboleths and Church organizations which are not of the essence of the Gospel. Many of our Tamil clergy, in their dread of the spread of anything like drunkenness, would like to use unfermented wine in Holy Communion. At present, they are forbidden by authority to do so. Is fermented wine of the essence of the Gospel? Very solemn were St. Peter's words, 'Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples?' (What 'yokes' are mentioned in the New Testament? Explain the metaphor? Find a further reference to this Mosaic yoke in the Epistle to the Galatians.)

(*d*) At the same time, *it directed abstinence from certain evils and customs* common in the Gentile world. (Notice difference in order be-

tween verse 20 and verse 29, and account for it.) These are four in number, and may be regarded as dealing with two main socio-religious questions, food and purity, questions which seriously affected the intercourse of Jew with Gentile. While, to our eyes, three of these may seem to refer to ceremonial matters, and only one to a directly moral one, we have to remember that in heathen countries, the moral and ceremonial are closely interwoven, and that social and religious customs are practically inseparable. When the Hindu takes his morning bath in river or tank (lake), the whole proceeding is practically an act of worship to the sun. When he proceeds to his meal, he is expected, besides ceremonial ablutions, to offer a portion to the household gods; and even the ball of rice which he appears to throw in pity to the crows which gather round his courtyard is really a sacrifice and bears that name. When the Hindu woman nightly lights her lamp, the act is associated with the worship of Agni, the god of fire. Even the ornamental chalkings on the ground outside her doorstep have a religious significance. We may look at the four points in some detail.

(1) '*Things sacrificed to idols*' were sold in the markets and eaten in ordinary household

meals and social feasts by the Gentiles of those days. (Where else are they mentioned? See 1 Cor. and Revelation). Even to this day, in India, one of the first points on which many a convert takes a stand is the refusal to touch food which has been offered, chiefly on festive occasions, to Hindu gods or demons. In particular, the Indian New Year is a great testing time with many. The family food in certain circles is cooked that day before the altars of the gods, and all are expected to partake freely of it. A refusal to touch it, on the part of one known to be interested in the Gospel, is regarded as a confession of faith in Christ.

Some years ago, the leading Hindus of a large town in the Tinnevelly District paid a visit of respect to the (late) Bishop of Madras, bringing garlands with them, bunches of plantains and other gifts. We had reason to think that some of these had previously been offered at the shrine of the god in the local temple. When challenged on the point, they acknowledged that this was the case. Of course, there was nothing to do but politely decline their gift, explaining to them the reason. It would never have done to have sanctioned their idolatrous actions with our eyes wide open. As regards the Jews, there were definite prohibitions

against it in the law of Moses. (Find them.) The Jews of the Dispersion, therefore, were careful to avoid it.

(2) '*Blood.*' The Gentiles ate this, while it was strictly forbidden to the Jew, and that for sacred and doctrinal reasons. (Find the passages which prove this, e.g., in Leviticus.) Devil-dancers in South India, when the afflatus is upon them, sometimes drink blood as it pours from the neck of a goat which they have slain before the shrine.

(3) '*Things strangled.*' To the Jew, this would come under the category of Lev. xvii. 13; he was not to eat any animal the blood of which had not been previously let out. The Gentiles, on the other hand, esteemed meat killed by strangling a special delicacy. It is for reasons such as these that the Jews always had, and still have, butchers of their own. There is in all of us a natural feeling in favour of this third prohibition. Some Indian clergy, at least, decline to admit to Holy Communion persons who touch carrion food.

(4) '*Fornication.*' Only those who live in heathen lands know how closely associated this is with idolatry and idol-feasts. There are Hindu sects which unite eating and drinking, in secret gatherings, with abominable sins.

In St. Paul's days, immorality formed part of the worship of many temples, as it does in India still. The temple of Aphrodite at Corinth alone had attached to it a thousand *hiero-douloi* or 'slaves of the gods,' who were public prostitutes. Readers of Miss Carmichael's books[1] will not need to be reminded that the same grave evil is rife in India. Dancing-girls (*deva-dasis*) are employed in the temples, prove an attractive part of car-festivals, since they are decked with silks and jewellery and placed on the cars beside the idol, and are sent for to sing and dance at Hindu weddings. Hindu social reformers candidly acknowledge these evils and deplore the inviting of such 'servants of the gods' to social functions, as they know full well that many a young man owes his first step on an awful downward path to their influence and attractions. We have known cases of would-be inquirers turned from Christ and holiness through snares in this direction deliberately placed in their way by Hindu relatives who would rather have them become moral wrecks than earnest Christians. Verily there is a cause for this decree. (In what other passages do idol-meats and fornica-

[1] *Things as They Are. Overweights of Joy. Lotus Buds.* (Morgan & Scott.)

tion occur together? See 1 Cor. and Revelation. In what two consecutive chapters of Leviticus are all four prohibited things mentioned in order?)

4. **The Consequences** (xv. 30–35, 40–41; xvi. 1–5).—The results of this missionary conference were great and far-reaching. We can only enumerate some of them, leaving the student to search the subject for himself.

(*a*) The special missionary work of St. Paul received the imprimatur of the whole Church. (*b*) Peace, joy and comfort were promoted in the Gentile Churches. (*c*) New missionaries were forthcoming for work among the Gentiles. (Where did St. Paul have a 'glad surprise' in the shape of a new comrade, after starting on his next journey? Look out the 'glad surprises' of Acts, each ushered in by a sudden 'lo' or 'behold.') (*d*) There was a fresh ingathering among the Heathen. (*e*) The Gospel was carried, without gainsaying, to new lands and provinces. (*f*) The cause of Gentile liberty was won, however much it might still be attacked from time to time by the circumcisionists. The flag of freedom had been raised aloft. It could never more be furled or taken down.

PREPARATION

Aim.

To learn the spirit in which Missionary problems should be faced and solved.

Assignments.

1. What can be learned from pp. 149–156 as to the mode and spirit in which missionary problems should be discussed?

2. What dangers might have confronted the Early Church if (*a*) the Jewish, (*b*) the Gentile party had had unlimited sway?

3. As a result of the Jewish controversy, how did the Home Church find benefit from the existence of the missionaries, and how did the missionaries benefit from the Home Church?

4. In the light of all the lessons learned, what should be the practical outcome of these studies?

Explanation.

It is important to know that the most difficult problems were faced in the first generation, and solved. This should teach us how to meet and solve even the hardest problems we have to meet. The guidance of the Holy Ghost is the key to the whole question.

In the first question the *mode* and *spirit* of such discussions is studied. It is applied to

the fourth question, so that when that comes up for discussion the lessons learned may be actually practised.

The second question helps us to see that in the example before us there were real dangers on both sides, and how difficult and insoluble it must have appeared beforehand.

The third question shows how the missionary and the home work of the Church may help and strengthen one another.

The fourth question is intended to raise the practical consideration of the outcome of the Circle. Unless the lessons learned lead to practical results, there is danger of hypocrisy.

The conclusion of the whole course is to show that the Acts of the Apostles is a missionary book from end to end, affording guidance not only upon all broad principles, but even upon many details of the work.

Further Questions.

1. How would you reconcile 1 Cor. viii. and x. with what is said concerning things sacrificed to idols in Acts xv. ?

2. Find out and classify the efforts made by the circumcision party at later dates, before the final fruits of the victory of liberty were gathered. In which Churches did they oppose St. Paul, and how ?

3. What special problems arose in the Corinthian Church, and how did St. Paul meet them ?

4. Find out and classify the special problems in the Churches of Rome, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica and Crete (e.g., social life, Church discipline, etc.).

5. What would you regard as the special problems of the Church to-day in Japan, Corea, China, Palestine, the Sudan?

6. How does the principle of 'no distinction' between race and race affect the relationship of foreign missionaries and native workers in India?

7. What Old Testament incidents exemplify the danger confronting Jews living in the midst of Gentiles?

8. On what occasion subsequent to the council of Jerusalem did St. Paul conform to special Jewish usages? How would you justify him from the charge of inconsistency?

9. Can you trace any connexion between Acts xv. and Rev. ii., iii.?

10. Which of the principles of this chapter might be worked out in a council of religious leaders at home to settle some of our 'unhappy divisions'?

11. The concordat of the Council of Jerusalem has been described (by Lightfoot and others) as a compromise. How far was this the case? To what extent are its prohibitions permanently binding?

12. Which of our English Church customs

would you consider unsuitable to be pressed upon an Eastern people? How far should these be enforced or relaxed?

13. Go through Acts i.–xv. section by section and mark those sections which seem to you to have no missionary bearing.

14. Prepare to discuss the following alternatives for the Uganda Mission: (*a*) that greater European supervision is needed, (*b*) that the Baganda should be left more to themselves.

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Walker, Thomas.
Missionary ideals : missionary studies
the Acts of the Apostles / by T. Walker.
London : Church Missionary Society, 1911
167p. ; 20cm.

1. Bible. N.T. Acts-- Study--Text-bo
2. Missions--Biblical teaching. 3. Miss
Study and teaching. I. Title.

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